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AUTHOR Bass, Gail V.
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the establishment of public alternative schools and programs from the perspective of school district management. An alternative school or program is defined as one that is full-time, is available to students on a voluntary basis, and is in some way distinctive from the district's standard program. Chapter 1 is introductory. Chapter 2 provides a background sketch of the sample districts. Chapter 3 describes the origins of alternatives, the methods for establishing new programs, the types of educational changes attempted, and the resources made available for implementation. Chapter 4 analyzes a series of management issues in implementing alternatives, comparing the ways in which these four districts handled them. The six issues are assigning staff, providing staff training, allocating facilities, establishing procedures for student selection of programs, providing information to the consumer, and establishing procedures for parental participation. Chapter 5 explores the current status and future prospects of alternatives in each district. Chapter 6 summarizes what has been learned about effective strategies for creating and managing public alternative schools under different types of conditions. An appendix examines the types of excess costs that may be involved. (Author/IFT)

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A STUDY OF ALTERNATIVES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION, VOL. I: DISTRICT POLICIES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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EDUCATION & WELFARE
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PREFACE

This report is the first volume of a series documenting a study of alternative schools in American education, sponsored by the National Institute of Education under Contract B2C-5326. There are five other volumes in the series, all forthcoming under the general title, *A Study of Alternatives in American Education*:

Vol. II: *The Role of the Principal*, by M. Thomas, R-2170/2-NIE.

Vol. III: *Teachers' Responses to Alternatives*, by R. Rasmussen, R-2170/3-NIE.

Vol. IV: *Family Choice in Schooling*, by G. Bridge and J. Blackman, R-2170/4-NIE.

Vol. V: *Diversity in the Classroom*, by P. Barker, T. K. Bikson, and J. Kimbrough, R-2170/5-NIE.

Vol. VI: *Summary and Policy Implications*, by D. Weiler, R-2170/6-NIE.

STUDY BACKGROUND

This study had its origins in 1972. In April of that year, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) funded an education voucher demonstration in Alum Rock, California, and awarded a study and evaluation contract to The Rand Corporation. Voucher systems require that funds for education be distributed directly to families in the form of certificates, which families can then use to purchase education at schools of their choice.¹ The government wished to test a voucher model that included competing public and private schools, with complex regulations designed to protect and advance the interests of

¹Findings for the first year of the voucher demonstration (1972-73) are reported in Daniel Weiler et al., *A Public School Voucher Demonstration: The First Year at Alum Rock*, The Rand Corporation, R-1495-NIE, June 1974, 4 vols. Alum Rock is an independent elementary school district in San Jose, California.

disadvantaged families.¹ But the OEO agreement with Alum Rock did not require immediate implementation of this model. In lieu of private schools participating in the demonstration, Alum Rock was to encourage parent choice and stimulate competition between schools--two key objectives of the voucher plan--by creating multiple programs within the public schools. Parents would be informed about their options and encouraged to select the programs they preferred for their children. Alum Rock and OEO agreed that this "public schools only" model was to be a "transition" toward a more complete voucher demonstration, and OEO continued to seek additional demonstration sites for a more extensive test of the voucher idea. The demonstration began in September 1972 with six schools, organized as twenty-two "mini-schools" offering a variety of educational approaches.

By the end of the second year of the demonstration--spring 1974--sponsorship of the voucher program had been assumed by the National Institute of Education. The transition to a full-scale model in Alum Rock had not taken place, and no new sites had joined the demonstration. Rand and NIE agreed, however, that while a more complete voucher test might still be arranged in Alum Rock or elsewhere, the existing demonstration was of interest in its own right: Thirteen public schools were offering forty-five program options to parents.² In effect, Alum Rock was testing a variant of an innovation that a number of observers had argued could improve the quality of public education--alternative schools.

It was agreed that while the main study would continue to concentrate on Alum Rock in 1974-75, a small side study would be undertaken to explore the nature of the alternative schools movement in

¹The "regulated compensatory" voucher model was originally proposed in a 1970 study commissioned by OEO. See Center for the Study of Public Policy, *Education Vouchers: A Report on Financing Elementary Education by Grants to Parents*, Cambridge, Mass., December 1970.

²There were at one time more than fifty mini-schools available to participating parents, in fourteen demonstration schools. Ten Alum Rock schools never joined the demonstration.

other districts. This study identified a number of areas where further analysis might yield a better understanding of the issues associated with implementing alternative schools. Many of these issues had already surfaced in Alum Rock.

By the fourth year of the demonstration (1975-76), prospects for creating a more comprehensive test of the voucher model had diminished appreciably, while the work that had already been accomplished in Alum Rock constituted a useful base for a modest comparative study of alternative schools. Accordingly, some project resources were shifted in that year toward the study of three new sites where alternative schools were being tried: Cincinnati, Ohio; Eugene, Oregon; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.¹ Data collection from these sites and Alum Rock was completed in 1976-77.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Alternative schools or educational programs--variously defined--can now be found in perhaps one out of every four school districts in the country.² These schools and programs serve a number of different client groups, offering some form of teaching style and method or curriculum content differing in important respects from the mainstream of educational programs in those districts. They have been created in response to a variety of social and political pressures, and are usually designed to meet some or all of the following objectives:

- o Social Equity. Extending to all parents the right to choose among educational alternatives that they consider best suited for their children, and/or reinforcing area- or district-wide desegregation plans by providing "magnet" programs.
- o Accountability. Creating schools that are more directly responsive to parent and student desires and needs, and

¹Criteria and methods for site selection are discussed in Chapter I of this report.

²National School Boards Association, *Alternative Schools*, Research Report 1976-3, Evanston, Illinois, 1976, p. 5.

more visible and open regarding their educational operations.

- o Incentives To Innovate. Providing expanded opportunities for teachers and administrators to offer new and different educational programs, where rewards for successful innovation are tied in part to extrinsic evaluations of success (parent and student demand) rather than (exclusively) to intrinsic criteria (administrator and colleague approval).
- o Diversity. Introducing program variety on the assumption that a uniform approach to education may be inefficient where the student clientele is socially and ethnically diverse, with a range of skills and interests that should be matched to appropriately varied educational opportunities.
- o Constituency Satisfaction. Increasing student, parent, teacher, and community satisfaction with the educational system, both as a desirable social goal in itself and as the means to other desirable objectives: increased social stability in the schools, greater parent support of school activities, and more community willingness to provide financial support for education.
- o Improved Student Outcomes. Improving student cognitive and noncognitive growth through better matching of students to programs, through improved teacher and administrator incentives to innovate, and through greater system accountability.

For the purposes of this study, an alternative school or program is defined as having at least three essential characteristics:

- o It is an educational program that is distinctly different in some way from the majority of programs in that district.
- o It is available to students on a voluntary basis.
- o It is a full-time educational program.

The study is confined to alternatives that meet this definition.¹

STUDY GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

As noted, this study had its origins in Rand's evaluation of the voucher demonstration in Alum Rock. In that district, rapid and complex changes in organization and procedure raised many questions about the problems that a district might encounter in attempting to implement a system of alternative schools. These questions became the main focal points of the research, as hypotheses generated on the basis of Rand's study of Alum Rock were tested against the experiences of other districts that have tried some version of an alternative schools program. We asked: What district strategies are most likely to lead to the successful implementation of alternatives under different circumstances? What are the effects of alternative programs on teacher behavior, and how do teachers influence the outcomes of such programs? What role does--or should--the school principal play? How do parents react--do they understand their choices? If so, how do they exercise their options? Is real diversity possible within the public schools, with the many internal and external pressures to conform to a common program?

The six reports in this study address these and related questions. The study is aimed at practitioners and community groups who may be contemplating the initiation of alternative schools, and at state and federal policymakers who may be asked to support alternatives and would like to be aware of the obstacles and opportunities that this innovation can create.

The study draws no conclusions about the relative desirability of alternatives; this is a value judgment that citizens and professionals must make on the basis of what they want from their schools. Thus, although individual authors have tried to make their own normative

¹In practice, we were obliged to select districts for the study on the basis of *claimed* and *apparent* program distinctiveness; the extent of actual distinctiveness was then treated as an issue to be explored in the course of the analyses. A discussion of the recent history of the alternatives movement will be found in Chapter I of this report.

positions clear, nothing in these reports should be interpreted as representing a Rand position on alternatives as an innovation in public education. Nor is this an evaluation: We have studied four districts to gain insight into common (and uncommon) problems; nothing in these reports should be construed as presenting evaluative judgments about the advisability or wisdom of any district policy. Finally, this study is not an assessment of the educational impact of alternatives on students. With the exception of Alum Rock--a unique case--the study did not have access to the longitudinal student outcome data that would have to be analyzed to make such an assessment.

The study utilizes a small purposive sample that was designed to select sites where an important effort had been made to implement alternatives. For reasons explained in a number of the reports, we believe that it is legitimate to assume that many of the study's findings will have wide applicability. Nevertheless, the reader should bear in mind the limited and selective nature of this sample when considering the generalizability of study results.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study findings are organized as a series of reports on the issues of implementing alternatives from the perspectives of major participants: district administrators, principals, teachers, and parents. A fifth report focuses on the extent of program diversity achieved in the Alum Rock mini-school system, and a sixth report presents a summary overview of the entire study. The reports are related, but each is also designed to be read as an independent study. The reader who completes the entire series will therefore notice some redundancy: Each report begins with a similar discussion of study methods and study site settings. There is also some inevitable overlap in the discussion of key issues, since a report that deals with any part of the educational system must to some extent discuss other aspects of the system as well. Thus, for example, the report that focuses on the role of the principal can hardly avoid discussing the views of teachers, and vice versa. In the interest of writing

reports that are independent research documents as well as part of a general study topic, we have made no attempt to eliminate these redundancies.

Since 1972, this study has produced 41 informal Working Notes for client (OEO and NIE) use, mostly on selected aspects of the Alum Rock demonstration. These documents, together with project Administrative Reports and original materials (documentary materials, surveys, and field notes) form an extensive primary and secondary data base, which has been drawn on as needed by the authors of study reports, largely without specific citation. Where it is appropriate to call the reader's attention to a particular source of evidence in the informal secondary materials, the latter are cited as unpublished papers. These and related unpublished materials are available from the National Institute of Education.

The introductory chapter of each report in the series provides further details about the particular focus, methods, and limitations of that report.

Daniel Weiler
Study Director

SUMMARY

This study analyzes the establishment of public alternative schools and programs from the perspective of school district management. It poses the following key questions: Why do school districts initiate alternative programs? What management issues do districts encounter in attempting to create diversity and choice within the framework of the public school? What district strategies increase the likelihood of alternatives being effectively implemented and becoming a stable part of district operations?

The study attempts to answer these questions by analyzing the experiences of four districts that have introduced alternative programs in their schools: Alum Rock, California; Cincinnati, Ohio; Eugene, Oregon; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. To compare systematically the development of alternatives across districts, the study relies on a model of educational innovation that conceives of the innovative process as consisting of three stages: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.

A comparison of the initiation stage in these four districts reveals fundamental differences among them in reasons for initiating alternatives, the resources made available for alternatives, the methods used to establish programs, and the types of educational changes attempted in the alternatives.

Alum Rock's adoption of alternatives (mini-schools) came about as a result of the district's participation in the federally sponsored voucher demonstration. There was little community or staff pressure for alternatives per se, but the district's superintendent successfully promoted the voucher demonstration as a means of advancing administrative decentralization and bringing additional funds into the financially troubled district. In Cincinnati, alternatives have been developed primarily as a means of bringing about voluntary desegregation of the schools and retaining middle-class families within the city limits. Cincinnati's alternatives strive to offer programs that are sufficiently attractive to draw both black and

white students from their neighborhood schools to integrated educational settings. In Eugene, alternative programs were initiated in response to demands from a segment of the community and staff for open, humanistic approaches to education. In Minneapolis, the first major involvement with alternatives consisted of a federally sponsored pilot program in a small area of the district, serving a community that had expressed considerable interest in alternatives. When the pilot project was in its second year of operation, the school board instructed the administration to begin planning for expansion of elementary-level alternatives throughout the district. The city-wide alternatives effort was intended to facilitate desegregation in the district--by providing educational choices to families whose children would be transported for desegregation purposes--and to advance educational reform throughout the district.

Two of these four districts, Alum Rock and Minneapolis, received multimillion-dollar federal grants to initiate their systems of alternatives. Minneapolis later committed substantial local funds to the creation of alternatives outside the pilot project area. Both Cincinnati and Eugene have relied exclusively on local resources to finance their alternatives. Cincinnati has allocated substantial extra funds to its alternatives. In Eugene, the district's policy has been that alternatives must cost no more per student than the district's regular schools.

The methods for establishing individual alternative programs differed markedly among the four districts, especially in terms of the role played by central district management. In Alum Rock, decisions about what programs to offer were left to principals and teachers at voucher schools. There was no provision for central review or approval of program offerings. In Eugene, proposals for alternatives were generated by interested groups of staff and/or parents and had to receive the approval of the district administration and school board before being implemented. The district has provided some technical support to groups interested in submitting proposals but has not actively encouraged the growth of the alternatives system. In Minneapolis, where, as in Eugene, consumer demand

provided the original impetus for alternatives, the strategy of using alternatives to further desegregation required a more active role by the district. The decision to offer alternatives district-wide was centrally mandated, but the actual design and planning of programs to be offered was left to the discretion of local staffs and communities. By contrast, in Cincinnati, most alternative programs have been designed--and decisions about program location made--by the central administration. The alternative programs in the four districts studied attempted many different types of educational changes, some involving new instructional methods and others involving special content or curriculum. Method-oriented programs have dominated in Minneapolis and Eugene, while Cincinnati and Alum Rock have developed some method-oriented and some content-oriented programs. In general, alternative programs in Minneapolis and Eugene have attempted to bring about major changes in the behavior of participating classroom teachers, whereas, for the most part, programs in Cincinnati and Alum Rock have not.

Despite the fact that alternatives systems may vary greatly from district to district--as the diversity among the four systems just described attests--certain common implementation challenges flow from a district's initial decision to introduce educational diversity and consumer choice into the public school system. This report examines the second stage of the innovative process--implementation--by comparing how these four districts handled each of six key management issues in the implementation of alternatives. The six issues are: (1) assigning staff to alternatives; (2) providing staff training and support; (3) allocating facilities to alternatives; (4) establishing procedures for student selection of programs; (5) providing information to consumers; and (6) establishing procedures for parental participation in governance. Based on the analysis of these individual issues, the report then reviews each district's overall role in the implementation process, focusing on district-level support for alternative programs.

District-level support for alternatives during implementation varied considerably among these four districts, both in amount and

in kind. In Alum Rock, the voucher concept of competition among independent educational suppliers gave rise to a radically decentralized approach to implementing alternatives. Funds for in-service and program development were allocated directly to the alternative programs (mini-schools), most of which used the money to compensate teachers for summer and weekend planning time. The district did not assume responsibility for training teachers in new educational techniques or approaches, nor were district staff active in developing curricula for the new programs. Central administrators were heavily involved in implementing some aspects of the voucher plan--developing new procedures for budgeting, personnel assignment, student admissions, attendance accounting, transportation, evaluation, and public information--but they provided very little direct support to teachers engaged in implementing educational changes at the classroom level.

In Cincinnati, while the central office was largely responsible for decisions about alternative program types and locations, once programs were established, the role of the central administration in actual implementation was substantially reduced. For about half of its fourteen alternative programs, the district has provided program coordinators, who assume overall responsibility for program leadership and curriculum development and play a major role in staff selection and student recruitment. The amount of district support received by an individual program seemed to depend both on the presence and abilities of such a coordinator, and on the commitment and bureaucratic skills of the senior central office administrator assigned overall supervision of the program's implementation. With rapid expansion in the number of alternatives in the last five years, the urgencies of starting up new programs have often diverted the attention of central office administrators from the continuing implementation problems of programs already in operation.

District support for alternatives during implementation in Eugene has been a mixed case. The alternatives have received personal support from the superintendent, and a special projects assistant was hired to serve as administrative liaison and advocate for the alternative programs. The alternatives have also been granted a degree

of flexibility in a number of areas--such as staffing--which has helped them pursue their distinct styles. However, the superintendent's commitment that alternatives would cost no more to operate than regular programs placed a serious restriction on the district's support for program implementation. The district has provided very few resources for staff development and planning of alternative programs.

In Minneapolis, the district's overall strategy for creating system-wide elementary alternatives has been one of providing leadership and coordination, while encouraging local responsibility for planning and implementing change. The federally financed pilot alternatives project became a working model for the rest of the district, providing a base for information dissemination and training efforts. A joint university-school district Teacher Center provided training in the district's basic alternative models not only for the teachers, but also for principals and district administrators, and in many cases for paraprofessional staff and parents. Many alternative schools have been provided supplementary staff positions to assist in implementing their new educational models.

The district has also adapted many of its administrative functions (e.g., personnel placement, curriculum development, facilities planning) to accommodate the needs of diverse programs.

An analysis of the current status of alternatives in each of these four districts reveals that they have been differentially successful in institutionalizing educational diversity and choice. With the cessation of federal support for the voucher demonstration, Alum Rock has retained some elements of the voucher plan--open enrollment among schools and increased decentralization of administrative decisionmaking to the school level--but its mini-schools (multiple alternative programs within individual schools) have been discontinued. Evidence suggests, however, that prior to their dissolution, there was little systematic diversity among the mini-schools' educational offerings. This would appear to be at least partly attributable to the low level of district leadership in implementing programmatic changes in the classroom.

Cincinnati, in the past five years, has developed a varied system of educational alternatives, some of which offer quite distinctive educational programs, while others do not. The district has recently begun efforts to systematize and clarify a wide range of policies and procedures affecting alternatives, and to streamline the administrative structure linking the alternatives to the central office. These efforts appear to represent a beginning in the process of institutionalizing alternatives in the district. However, a number of obstacles stand in the way of institutionalization: financial constraints that may limit the district's ability to provide continuing support to maintain program quality, the administrative complexities of managing a "system within a system," and tensions between the interests of alternative and regular schools that adversely affect recruitment for and support of alternatives. A pending desegregation suit adds further uncertainty to the future of Cincinnati's alternatives.

In the past four years, Eugene has institutionalized a formal process for proposing and adopting alternative programs. Eugene's elementary alternatives seem to offer educational programs that are clearly different from those of its regular schools; however, after a few years of implementation, there appears to be a slight trend back toward conventional practice in several programs. The limited size of the alternatives effort has allowed the district to handle these programs for the most part on an ad hoc basis, with few changes in overall district policy. While informal district support for the programs continues to be relatively high, the lack of institutionalized support in the form of resources and formal policies may leave the alternatives vulnerable to turnover in administration and program personnel.

Minneapolis seems to have succeeded in its efforts to provide genuine educational choices at the elementary level, though there is some tendency for its contemporary (traditional) and open models to converge toward the "middle-of-the-road" continuous progress program in terms of actual classroom practice. In response to community demand, the district has recently expanded the range of elementary

choices by establishing several "fundamentals schools." One of the district's three administrative areas is moving toward involvement of all its elementary schools in alternatives, while the other areas are not presently pushing development of additional elementary alternatives. They seem to be supporting their existing programs. The district is currently turning its attention to the expansion of educational choices at the secondary level.

This report concludes with a discussion of the implications of these four districts' experiences for other districts implementing educational alternatives. Specifically, it is argued that if alternatives systems are to survive in the long run, district officials must take an active and supportive stance during their implementation. Furthermore, because alternatives may serve substantially different functions in different districts (as they did in the sample districts), the role played by district officials should vary accordingly. The final chapter describes elements of an effective district role in each of three types of alternatives systems: alternatives as a localized change strategy, alternatives as a comprehensive change strategy, and alternatives as a desegregation strategy.

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Many people assisted in the preparation of this report. Three Rand colleagues--Roger Rasmussen, Margaret Thomas, and Daniel Weiler--played key roles in the collaborative research effort of which this study was a part. They shared in the data collection (their presence made fieldwork much more pleasant), served as "reality checks" during the analysis phase, and offered many useful comments on preliminary drafts. I am especially indebted to Paul Berman, also of Rand, who provided intellectual guidance and moral support throughout the study.

Stephen Weiner of the University of California, Berkeley, John Pincus of Rand, and Gene Grigsby, Karen Scott, and Dick Williams of UCLA all reviewed an earlier draft of this report and contributed significantly to its improvement. David Mandel, the contract monitor at NIE, furnished many helpful suggestions at all stages of the research.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to Superintendents William Jefferds of Alum Rock, James Jacobs of Cincinnati, Thomas Payzant of Eugene, and Raymond Arveson of Minneapolis for their gracious cooperation in this study. Many other administrators, teachers, and community members in these districts--too numerous to mention--contributed to this research by sharing their experience and insights about educational alternatives. Without their generous help, the study would not have been possible. Particular thanks are due Marge Hols in Minneapolis and Dean Moore in Cincinnati for the special assistance they provided.

Responsibility for the interpretations and conclusions offered here is, of course, mine alone.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the establishment of public alternative schools and programs from the perspective of school district management. Its major purpose is to offer guidance to school district officials about the development and management of educational alternatives. It should also be of interest to federal and state policy-makers concerned with alternatives as a mechanism for educational reform or those generally concerned with the implementation of complex changes in public school districts.

The study poses the following key questions: Why do school districts initiate alternative programs? What management issues do districts encounter in attempting to create diversity and choice within the framework of the public schools? What district strategies increase the likelihood of alternatives being effectively implemented and becoming a stable part of district operations? It attempts to answer these questions by analyzing the experiences of four districts that have introduced alternative programs in their schools: Alum Rock, California; Cincinnati, Ohio; Eugene, Oregon; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

For the purposes of this study, an alternative school or program is defined as one that has at least the following three characteristics: (1) It is a full-time educational program; (2) it is available to students on a voluntary basis; and (3) it is in some way distinctive from the district's standard educational program. This definition excludes programs designed to serve special groups of students, such as continuation schools for potential dropouts, teen-age maternity centers, or special education programs for children with learning disabilities. Many districts do refer to such programs as "alternatives," but, because students are often assigned or counseled into such programs, they do not meet our second criterion of voluntary enrollment.

This introductory chapter deals with necessary preliminary matters. The experiences of the four districts examined in this report are in

many ways unique, but they also reflect a broader educational movement whose origins lie beyond the particulars of district policies. We, therefore, establish the historical context first, by a brief review of the development of the educational alternatives movement in the United States. This historical background helped shape our research approach, which is described in the second section of this chapter.

Origins and Development of Educational Alternatives

The educational alternatives movement is based on two fundamental concepts. The first is that there is no one best system for educating all students. The second is that consumers--parents and students--should have a greater voice in determining the content and process of public education. These dual thrusts for diversity and choice may be seen, in the long view, as reactions to many of the trends that have shaped America's public school system during the past 200 years: professionalization, centralization, and the move toward universal compulsory attendance. More immediately, the proliferation of public educational options represents the school system's response to a variety of recent social and educational pressures.

Over the past two decades, American schools have been under frequent attack from many sides. They have been variously charged to become more efficient, more humane, more accountable, more "ecstatic," more individualized, and more racially and socially integrated. The 1960s was a period of unprecedented reform activity for the public schools. New curricula (especially in science and mathematics), innovative technologies (programmed instruction, teaching machines), and organizational changes (team teaching, differentiated staffing) were adopted by many school districts. For the first time, billions of federal dollars became available to local schools, most of it for compensatory education for poor youngsters with special needs, and some of it to support locally chosen innovative projects. By the early 1970s, however, there was widespread disillusionment with the

attempted reforms of the previous decade. Evaluations of compensatory programs were generally disappointing (Westinghouse Learning Corporation/Ohio University, 1969; Wargo et al., 1972; Averch et al., 1974). Studies revealed that many new practices had been introduced into the schools in name only--they had never really been implemented in the classrooms (Goodlad et al., 1970; Sarason, 1971).

Most of these reforms reflected, at least implicitly, the quest for the "one best way" of educating children (Fantini, 1973). The prevailing model of education research, development, and dissemination assumed that as new techniques were tried, those that were demonstrated to be "better" than the old ways would spread throughout the system. The experiences of the '60s led to increased questioning of these assumptions. On the one hand, this model did not accurately reflect how schools change--it ignored the realities of public school incentives, organization, and politics. On the other hand, the very notion that there was a single best way to teach children became suspect. Could a uniform system really be expected to serve the needs of a pluralistic society?

A number of dissatisfied clients and observers of education began to say "no," and by the mid-1960s, the public schools began to face the challenge of alternative schools created outside the public school system. Allen Graubard, in "The Free School Movement," traces "two distinct ideological sources for an alternative school movement, one political and one pedagogical (or more broadly, cultural)" (Graubard, 1972, p. 353). The political source stemmed from the civil rights movement of the '60s, with the establishment of "freedom" schools in the South, aimed at continuing the education of black students boycotting segregated public schools, and some black community schools in Northern ghettos. The pedagogically based "free" school, rooted in the '60s counterculture, maintained that students are naturally motivated to learn, and do so best when given "freedom supported by adults who enrich the environment and offer help."

As Graubard explains:

Each kind of school is an alternative, articulating a profound opposition to the methods and results of the public schools (this is not true of most private schools); each is a "free" school. But one trend emphasizes the role of the school in the community's struggle for freedom and equality (the freedom of the "Freedom now!" cry of the civil rights movement), while the other represents the strongest possible claim for the individual child's freedom from coercive approaches to learning and social development as expressed by the organization and techniques of most public schools. [P. 353]

At the secondary level, so-called "street academies" emerged in a number of urban centers to serve students (mostly minority) who had dropped, or been pushed, out of public schools. These alternatives to the public schools served only a small proportion of public school students (Graubard, 1972). But they signaled symbolically the failure of the public system to meet the needs of some of its clientele, and they received considerable publicity. Many people, including parents and staff, began asking why some features of the private alternative schools--freer learning environments, greater responsiveness to individual students, more community participation--could not be created within the framework of the public schools. Philadelphia's Parkway Program, the first school-without-walls, opened in 1969 and soon received widespread attention in national media (Bremer and von Moschzisker, 1971). By 1970, the notion of public alternative schools was developing a small but loyal following; the International Consortium for Options in Public Education (ICOPE)¹ estimates that at that time there were fewer than 100 such programs operating nationwide (Barr, 1975, p. 3).

¹Founded in 1972, ICOPE is an organization dedicated to supporting the development of options in public education. During the past five years, it has sponsored numerous conferences for educators on the subject of alternatives and has published several directories of public alternative schools.

In 1971, a major new federal effort for school reform, the U.S. Office of Education's Experimental Schools Program, provided a spur to the alternatives movement. Recognizing the shortcomings of the reforms of the '60s, the program was designed to test whether it was possible to bring about "comprehensive" change in schools. Piecemeal efforts to alter specific aspects of curriculum, teaching methods, or school organization had generally had disappointing results. Would a program that attacked all of these elements simultaneously stand a greater chance of success? Three of the districts that received Experimental Schools grants (Berkeley, California; Franklin Pierce (Seattle), Washington; Minneapolis, Minnesota) proposed to develop a variety of options within their public school systems. The Office of Education's promise of long-term (five-year) support for these experiments was a strong endorsement of the emerging movement for educational pluralism. The experts seemed to be saying, "We really don't know what works best, so let the people--parents, students, teachers--choose the educational models they prefer."

At about the same time, another new federal education initiative was beginning. In 1972, the Alum Rock School District in East San Jose, California, signed a contract with the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to embark on a five-year education voucher demonstration.¹ Provisions of California law at that time prevented

¹In the late 1960s, OEO began investigating vouchers as a possible mechanism for enhancing the educational opportunities of poor families. The idea was to create an education marketplace in which parents could use vouchers backed by public funds to purchase their children's education at the public or private school of their choice. Voucher proponents argued that wealthy parents could already avail themselves of options outside the public schools, and that vouchers would give the same opportunity to middle-class and disadvantaged parents. The public schools would become more responsive to the needs of students, it was reasoned, because for the first time they would have an economic incentive to do so.

OEO proposed that a special "regulated compensatory voucher model" be tried in a number of school districts, with the federal government underwriting the costs of the experiment. Admissions to schools would be determined by lottery to prevent racial discrimination, and disadvantaged students would receive "compensatory vouchers" in addition to the standard per student allotment. OEO's overtures met with little

private schools from joining the demonstration; the contract therefore provided for a "transition" voucher model in which only public schools would participate at first. Later, if the law permitted, private schools were to join. To introduce elements of competition and choice that would temporarily make up for the absence of private schools in the demonstration, the public schools were reorganized into mini-schools, each offering a distinctive educational program. Parents could choose among all the programs in the participating schools. Enabling legislation was subsequently passed permitting private schools to join the demonstration, but for various legal and political reasons, that never came to pass. Alum Rock remained an experiment in creating alternatives within the public school system.

While the federal government was supporting large and costly experiments involving alternatives in a few districts, an increasing number of other districts began instituting one or a few alternatives without outside financial assistance. Reflecting on the spread of alternatives across the nation in the first half of the 1970s, an ICOPE spokesman comments:

Four years ago (1971), the concept of alternative public schools was viewed as a "radical idea." Slowly during the last few years this perception has changed to one of "provocative interest." Finally, today, it is viewed by most as a conservative response to local problems or needs. Once a volatile political issue between local advocates, increasingly school boards and school superintendents are simply saying "We need alternatives in our district" and finding little resistance to the idea. [Barr, 1975, p. 7]

It is difficult to establish the dimensions of the alternative schools movement with precision, partly because of varying definitions

enthusiasm from public educators. A number of school districts undertook feasibility studies for a voucher experiment; all but one, Alum Rock, eventually rejected the plan. For further background on education vouchers, see Center for the Study of Public Policy (1970), and Weiler et al. (1974a).

of "alternative." As alternatives have become educationally fashionable, some districts have relabeled traditional "options," such as continuation high schools for potential dropouts, as alternatives. Nonetheless, a 1975 survey of school board members, that defined alternatives as "the availability of options to students (or their parents)," at least gives a sense of the pervasiveness of self-proclaimed alternatives (National School Boards Association, 1976, p. 5).

One-fourth of the representative national sample of board members reported alternatives operating in their districts. Thirteen percent reported alternatives only at the secondary level in their districts, 6 percent indicated only elementary alternatives, and another 6 percent said their districts provided alternatives for both elementary and secondary students. The availability of alternatives appears to be positively correlated with district size: 18 percent of respondents from districts with 1-599 students said their districts offer alternatives, while 39 percent from districts with 5,000 to 9,999 students and 66 percent from districts enrolling over 25,000 students reported alternatives in their districts.

Estimates of the actual number of alternative schools in the nation vary. As of the spring of 1975, ICOPE had identified 1,250 operating alternative public schools, but projected that during the 1975-76 school year the true number would approach 5,000 (Barr, 1975, p. 3).¹ Their updated estimate for the 1977 school year places the total at over 10,000 (*Changing Schools*, No. 21, 1977, p. 1). A more conservative current estimate of 1,250 to 1,300 alternative schools comes from the National Alternative Schools Program (NASP) at the University

¹ICOPE's figures are not based on a systematic national survey, but rather "on information gathered at regional conferences, from news items, through correspondence and from regional and state directories." Their 1975 data suggest that the alternatives movement has been concentrated in a small number of states. Of the 1,250 alternatives they identified that year, 70 percent were clustered in nine states (California, New York, Washington, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Illinois). California accounted for 29 percent of the total; New York was a distant second with 11 percent (Barr, 1975, p. 5).

of Massachusetts, which has spent the last year compiling a directory based on mail and telephone surveys.¹

As the alternatives movement has grown, a wider variety of schools and programs has been subsumed under the rubric "alternative." An alternative may differ from other schools in its district on a variety of dimensions. In many cases, "alternative" carries a special connotation about the way in which a school is run, namely, that decisionmaking is shared by the entire school community--parents, students, teachers, and administrators.² Instructionally, alternatives may employ a distinctive *method* or *style* (e.g., open schools, continuous progress schools, fundamental schools, Montessori schools) or they may offer a special *curriculum* (e.g., bilingual, creative and performing arts, math-science, environmental education). Alternatives may be organized in a number of different ways. They may be organized as *mini-schools* (several distinct programs sharing a building), *schools-within-schools* (a specialized program sharing a building with a larger host school), or *independent schools* in separate buildings. The term *schools-without-walls* refers to alternative programs patterned after Philadelphia's Parkway Program, where students do much of their learning in cultural and community institutions outside the confines of a school building.

Recently, the use of educational options as a school desegregation strategy has added another dimension to the alternatives movement.

¹This estimate was conveyed in a personal communication from NASP personnel. Two of the reasons for the discrepancies between ICOPE's and NASP's estimates may be: (1) NASP's survey concentrated on large, urban districts, and so may have missed some alternatives in smaller and rural districts; and (2) ICOPE uses a more liberal definition of alternatives. For example, ICOPE includes continuation schools in its count whereas NASP does not. In 1975, continuation schools accounted for 20 percent of the ICOPE alternatives. The fact that California requires all districts to offer continuation schools helps explain why that state accounted for 29 percent of the alternatives identified by ICOPE (Barr, 1975, p. 8).

²This model of participatory decisionmaking is most prevalent in programs that stress self-directed learning by students, i.e., "open" or "free" schools.

Many school districts--some under court order, some seeking to forestall court action--are offering alternative or "magnet" programs--specialized offerings designed to attract students of all races and nationalities. The hope is that parents will willingly send their children to integrated schools outside their neighborhood if their educational programs are attractive enough. Judges in both Boston and Dallas have included magnet schools as part of court-ordered desegregation schemes. As part of the Education Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94-482), Congress amended the Emergency School Aid Act to authorize federal expenditures of \$25 million in fiscal year 1977 and \$50 million in fiscal year 1978 to support three innovative approaches to school desegregation--magnet schools, neutral site schools, and the pairing of schools with businesses and colleges. The fiscal 1977 appropriation for these three activities totals \$7.5 million, of which the Office of Education estimates about \$7 million will be used for magnet school awards (United States Office of Education, 1977, p. 7).

A factor affecting further development of alternative schools today is declining student enrollment, which looms large for many school districts. Reduced enrollment can free space to set up alternative schools, especially schools-within-schools. Some urban districts, where enrollment decline has been particularly severe, see alternative programs as a strategy for keeping families from leaving the city, attracting them back from the suburbs, or even enrolling out-of-district students on a tuition basis. At the same time, declining enrollment can mean tighter budgets in already difficult financial times, and a consequent reluctance to assume even the start-up costs associated with new programs. Declining enrollment also creates organizational problems that can impede a district's ability to implement alternatives, such as reduced ability to hire qualified staff, or resistance of neighborhood schools to losing a portion of their already dwindling enrollments to alternative programs. Given the interplay of these factors, it is difficult to predict how lowered enrollments will ultimately affect the evolution of alternatives.

Over the past several years, the social and educational climate that first spawned alternatives has also been changing. The "counter-culture," with its advocacy of student freedom, has subsided, and there is a growing movement to go "back to basics" in education. While open or informal schools (patterned after the British infant schools) dominated the public alternative school scene until recently, a number of districts have instituted "fundamental" alternatives, stressing traditional approaches to learning as well as discipline and patriotism. It is significant to note that both these types of schools sometimes coexist in the same districts. Swings of the pedagogical pendulum--from conservative to progressive and back again--have typified the history of American education. In the past, some school boards have mandated that entire districts move--en masse--in one direction or the other. It appears today that, in at least some places, that pattern has been broken, which may indicate that the concept of educational pluralism within the public schools has begun to take root.

The concept of alternatives has thus come to enjoy growing acceptance in American education, but this is only part of the story. Recent research on a variety of educational innovations demonstrates that the formal adoption of new techniques and approaches by school districts is no guarantee of how much change will take place. The implementation of innovations has proved to be so difficult that few change efforts have fulfilled their promise (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975; Ford Foundation, 1972; Goodlad et al., 1970; Sarason, 1971). Thus a mere count of programs labeled as alternatives across the nation is likely to overstate the movement's effects.

Implementation may be even more difficult for alternatives than for other less complex innovations. If alternatives are in fact to provide genuine options, they require, in the first instance, innovation at the school or program level. They may also require significant changes in district operations, depending on the number and type of alternatives offered and the rules governing program choice. The need to orchestrate all these changes can be expected to compound the

problems inherent in putting any single change into practice. Thus, the success of an alternatives effort in a school district depends on the district's ability to overcome these implementation problems, and the ultimate fate of the alternatives movement nationally hinges on these discrete implementation experiences.

Research Approach

As explained in the preface, this study grew out of Rand's analysis of the Alum Rock voucher demonstration. After studying Alum Rock's experience with implementing a system of educational choice for several years, we wanted to place that experience in broader perspective, as one of numerous attempts to introduce diversity and choice in the public schools. We found, however, that while there is sizable literature on organizational change in schools, very little research had been conducted on the development of public alternative schools. This suggested the need for an exploratory study that would enable us to understand the implementation process and identify the main factors that govern it. We therefore decided to trace the implementation of alternatives in each of several additional districts. This comparative approach would allow us to describe the common challenges posed by a policy of offering alternatives and to analyze how and with what results these challenges were dealt with in different situations.

Stages of Innovation

To compare systematically the development of alternatives across districts, we needed a model of the innovative process around which to organize our data collection and analysis. The model we selected was developed as part of Rand's study of federally funded "change agent" programs in education, and conceives of the innovative process as consisting of three states: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization (Berman and McLaughlin, 1974, 1975).

Initiation refers to the first period in the life of an innovation--the generation of the idea; the formulation of preliminary plans; the mobilization of support from administrators, teachers,

school board, and parents; and in some instances, the acquisition of resources from outside the district.¹ Implementation represents the translation of innovative plans into practice, involving all the complexities of making a new system work. For implementation to be successful, a planned innovation and the adapting organization must both change to accommodate each other, through a process of "mutual adaptation" (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975, p. 10). Institutionalization refers to the stage at which an innovation, if it has survived long enough, loses its special status and becomes part of the routinized behavior of the organization. Only if new practices are thus incorporated into the system can it be confidently asserted that change has been accomplished.²

Empirically, these three phases of innovation are not totally distinct nor do they occur in a simple linear sequence. Rather, they overlap and interact. For districts that phase in a variety of alternatives over a period of several years, institutionalization may be occurring in some parts of the system, while mobilization of support is just beginning in other parts of the system. The important points are that an innovation must pass through these stages if it is to transform the system significantly, and that the patterns of district support and district decisions in each phase have important implications for the outcomes of the innovation.

Methods

Site selection. In choosing the additional sites for this study, we established certain minimal criteria. These helped us guarantee

¹For innovations supported by external funds, the change agent study identified two ideal-types of initiation processes: opportunism and problem-solving. "Projects generated essentially by opportunism seemed to be a response to available funds and were characterized by a lack of interest and commitment on the part of local participants... The problem-solving motive for projects emerged primarily in response to locally identified needs and was associated with a strong commitment to address these needs." (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975, p. 9.)

²Berman and McLaughlin (1977b) found that few federally funded educational innovations are successfully institutionalized.

comparability with Alum Rock and allowed us to select districts that had made a major commitment to alternatives. We wanted to find districts that (1) had elementary school alternatives (because Alum Rock schools cover only grades kindergarten through eight, we wanted to avoid districts that offered only secondary alternatives)¹; (2) offered at least three different options (i.e., two options besides the so-called "regular" program); (3) had at least 5 percent of their elementary students in alternative programs; and (4) had been operating alternatives for several years. Telephone contacts were made with twenty-seven districts that we identified through alternative school directories or that were recommended by expert informants as being likely to meet our criteria. Most of these failed to pass at least one of our four tests.² Several districts that met these four criteria were eliminated because of their size. One otherwise likely prospect was so small (fewer than 5,000 students) that we decided its experiences would be atypical. At the other extreme, we avoided several potentially interesting districts because they were so large (over 200,000 students) that we felt we could not fathom their alternative systems within our limited budget for field visits.

From the remaining districts, we wanted to select three that would offer some variation in district size and demographic characteristics and represent different regions of the country. In our

¹Though the three districts finally selected all offer some secondary alternatives in addition to their elementary alternatives, we have concentrated our attention on the elementary programs in each district.

²A large number of districts that our informants thought might satisfy our screening criteria turned out, in fact, to offer only a few programs, involving a very small number of students. Such districts probably represent the modal case among districts offering any alternatives at all. Our search for districts with a large-scale commitment to alternatives thus assured us an unrepresentative sample, but this was a deliberate choice on our part. We reasoned that alternatives would be a more salient issue to district management where there were more of them and more students were involved, and it would therefore be easier to study the dynamics of implementation at all levels of the system in such districts. We also felt that the findings from more ambitious alternatives efforts would be relevant to districts attempting just a few programs, whereas the reverse was less likely to be true.

judgment, Cincinnati, Eugene, and Minneapolis satisfied these criteria better than any other combination of districts, and also enabled some especially interesting comparisons to be made. For example, Eugene and Cincinnati have initiated alternatives using only local funds, while Alum Rock and Minneapolis received large infusions of outside funds.¹ Also, alternatives were related to desegregation efforts in Minneapolis and Cincinnati, though their racial composition and strategies differed, but segregation was not a factor in either Eugene or Alum Rock.

Data collection. In discussing our data collection, it is necessary to distinguish between Alum Rock and the other three sites. Rand has been engaged in extensive and varied data collection and analysis activities in Alum Rock for the past five years, including parent and teacher surveys; personal interviews with community leaders, district officials, principals and teachers; observation at staff and community meetings; classroom observation; student cognitive and attitudinal testing; collection of budgetary data and other documentary materials. For Alum Rock, we therefore had a rich accumulation of data and analyses on which to draw.

For our other three districts we did not have similar opportunities for longitudinal data collection. In Minneapolis, there had been a large federal investment in both internal and external evaluation of the pilot alternatives project funded by the Southeast Alternatives Experimental Schools Program, and these evaluations have provided useful information for our study²; however, those evaluations deal

¹ Another federal Experimental Schools site--Berkeley, California--satisfied our screening criteria, but we did not wish to have two Experimental Schools sites in our limited sample. We also selected Minneapolis because that district's attempt to disseminate alternatives district-wide represented a particularly interesting implementation problem for study.

² In particular, we made extensive use of *Southeast Alternatives Final Report 1971-1976*, by Anthony J. Morley, a historical account that succeeds admirably in capturing the spirit of the project.

Rand staff members had also had the opportunity to study the Minneapolis Public Schools in connection with several other recent research projects. We therefore had access to much valuable background information on the system's operations as a basis for our own investigation of alternatives.

very little with expansion of alternatives beyond the pilot Southeast area.

Rand's data collection outside of Alum Rock consisted primarily of fieldwork, supplemented in both Minneapolis and Eugene by a survey of teachers in alternative and nonalternative schools. Two Rand staff members spent three weeks each in Cincinnati, Eugene, and Minneapolis, conducting personal interviews, observing both alternative and regular schools and programs, and collecting documents and available research materials in each district. Interviews were conducted with school board members, central office personnel (superintendent, assistant and area superintendents, business manager, personnel director, research and evaluation personnel, director of alternative programs), building principals (of both regular and alternative schools), head teachers or program coordinators of alternatives, other teachers, and parents and community representatives.

We spent most of our time in the field visiting alternative programs. In Eugene, which has fewer alternatives than the other two districts, we were able to visit all the elementary alternative programs. In both Cincinnati and Minneapolis, we selected a representative sample of schools according to alternative program type and location. We visited 15 of the 25 alternative sites operating in Cincinnati during 1975-76 (when our study began) and 18 of 59 elementary schools in Minneapolis.¹ In addition, we visited several nonalternative schools in Eugene and Cincinnati. During each of these visits, we interviewed the principal and head teacher (if there was one) and several other teachers selected at random, and we also observed classrooms. Classroom observation in both alternative and regular programs

¹As will be explained in Chapter III, Minneapolis now considers all of its elementary schools to be alternatives, and does not, therefore, distinguish between "regular" and "alternative" schools. However, only about half of its elementary schools have been actively involved in the effort to develop educational choices, and these schools are concentrated closer to the central part of the district. Consequently, our sample of 18 schools included 14 such "inner" schools and only 4 "outer" schools and is not geographically balanced over the district. However, it includes schools from each of the three administrative regions of the district.

was informal rather than structured. It gave us an impressionistic sense of the educational program, of the extent to which alternative schools are distinct from each other and from regular schools, and of the congruence between alternative program practice and the descriptions given to parents.

In both Eugene and Minneapolis we were able to obtain permission to field a survey of teachers that paralleled the spring 1977 Alum Rock teacher survey,¹ the last in a set of annual surveys of the Alum Rock staff. The self-administered closed-ended questionnaires asked alternative school teachers about their experiences with and attitudes toward both alternatives in general and the specific program in which they work. Topics covered included: preparation to teach in the new program, ways in which teaching behavior changed in the alternative program, roles of principal and parents in the program, ways in which alternatives affected various areas of school organization and practice, and classroom style and organization. A subset of these questions was administered to regular classroom teachers in each district for comparative purposes.² This report's analysis of the implementation of

¹No teacher survey was administered in Cincinnati. The district administers its own annual teacher survey and did not wish to burden teachers with an additional questionnaire.

²The number of teacher questionnaires distributed and response rates in the three districts are as follows:

District	Number Sent	Percent Responding
Alum Rock		
All teachers in district	510	95
Minneapolis		
All teachers in a sample of 18 schools	328	70
Eugene		
All teachers in elementary alternatives	30	73
All regular teachers in buildings housing elementary alternatives	89	56
All teachers in a sample of 8 other regular schools	119	72

alternatives in these three districts relies in part on the information obtained from teachers in these surveys. A more complete analysis of these surveys and of teachers' perspectives on alternatives will be found in the companion volume in this series (Rasmussen, 1978).

Limitations of This Study

In understanding this study of alternatives, we were primarily concerned with accurately describing the implementation process in a few districts. We felt that, by providing a qualitative sense of the factors that are important in implementing alternatives, these case studies could help policymakers interested in developing educational options in other settings and suggest hypotheses for future research.

We studied only four districts, so it is not safe to generalize from this work. But, there are two factors that, in our opinion, help to justify our drawing inferences from these four cases beyond what might otherwise be appropriate. First, while formal data collection for this project was limited to four sites, we have reviewed the literature that describes the experiences of many other districts and informally interviewed practitioners active in alternatives around the country. These other sources have bolstered our sense that the implementation problems encountered by our four districts are representative of the alternatives movement nationally. Second, what we learned about implementing alternatives was generally consistent with the results of other recent research on educational innovation, especially regarding the interplay between district administration and individual schools in accomplishing program changes.¹ Though these two considerations contribute to our confidence that our findings are valid, we still regard the conclusions and policy implications stated at the end of this report as tentative.

¹The role of district management in mobilizing support for, implementing, and sustaining innovations in schools is analyzed by Berman and McLaughlin (1977a; 1977b, Chapter 6).

This study is not an evaluation of the policy of offering alternatives. To answer the overall policy question, "Should public educational alternatives be supported?," one must first make value judgments about the desirability of diversity and choice. Even if one decides that it makes sense to offer people educational options, it is still necessary to determine empirically whether alternatives can successfully be implemented in public school systems. Can educational programs be effectively changed to offer distinct alternatives? Can districts learn to accommodate and support such diversity in their systems? This study helps answer such questions, but does not definitely resolve the implementation issue.

Lastly, one would need to assess how alternatives, once implemented, affected a variety of outcomes, including student cognitive development, student attitudes and effective development, and community satisfaction with the schools. We have not addressed such assessments in this study because we felt that understanding the process of implementation must precede assessments of ultimate effects.¹

Organization of This Report

Chapter II provides a background sketch of each of our sample districts.

Chapter III describes the origins of alternatives, the methods for establishing new programs, the types of educational changes attempted, and the resources made available for implementation in these four districts.

Chapter IV analyzes a series of management issues in implementing alternatives, comparing the ways in which these four districts handled them. The six issues are: assigning staff to alternatives, providing staff training and support, allocating facilities to alternatives, establishing procedures for student selection of programs, providing

¹For a report on parent reactions to alternatives, see the companion volume in this series, Bridge and Blackman (1978).

information to consumers, and establishing procedures for parental participation in governance. The final section of the chapter discusses each district's role in managing implementation and providing support for its alternatives.

Chapter V explores the current status of alternatives in each of the four districts and the prospects for their future. In particular, it assesses the extent to which alternatives are in fact providing educational diversity and how far these districts have progressed toward institutionalizing a system of choice.

Chapter VI summarizes what we have learned about effective strategies for creating and managing public alternative schools under different types of conditions.

An appendix examines the types of excess costs that may be involved in implementing alternatives, and briefly addresses the issue of external funding for alternatives.

II. DISTRICT BACKGROUND

To understand the implementation of an innovative project, it is important to know something about the institutional setting into which it is introduced. A concept such as educational alternatives is likely to be treated differently, and have varying fates, depending on a number of features of the local community and school district organization. This chapter briefly describes aspects of the community and organizational contexts that we believe are significant in explaining the course of alternatives efforts in these four districts. This information must be kept in mind when drawing implications from these cases for other settings.

Alum Rock, California

Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is a moderate-sized district on the east side of San Jose, California, enrolling about 15,000 students in grades K-8. Had it not been for its participation in the federal education voucher experiment, it is likely that few people would ever have heard of Alum Rock. As the president of its school board commented after just one year of the demonstration: "Alum Rock used to be at the bottom of the list in terms of everything--tax base, student expenditures, test scores. But now, you know, you can get your mail delivered simply 'Alum Rock, California!'"

The Alum Rock School District does not coincide with other local political jurisdictions. Established in 1930 as a rural district with only 1 school, as late as 1950 it still had only 3 schools. Then, during a period of rapid housing construction and population growth in the 1960s, the district opened several new schools a year for a number of years. By the time the voucher demonstration began in the fall of 1972, Alum Rock was operating 24 schools--19 elementary and 5 middle schools.¹ At that time its enrollment numbered 15,248,

¹An additional middle school opened in the fall of 1973.

about 51 percent of whom were Spanish surnamed and about 12 percent of whom were black. By the fall of 1976 its total enrollment was 13,861, with 57 percent Spanish surnamed students and 12 percent black students. In 1972, the district's schools were pretty well balanced racially and ethnically and they remain so today.

Alum Rock has many poor people. In 1970, the median family income for the Alum Rock area was \$10,150, which was below that for the city of San Jose (\$12,456). Ten percent of Alum Rock's families had incomes below the poverty level, compared with 5.6 percent for all of San Jose. Many of its residents have had little formal education and are employed in unskilled or semiskilled jobs.¹ In 1972-73, more than a third of Alum Rock's students came from families eligible for welfare and three-fourths qualified for free or reduced-price lunch programs.² Not surprisingly, minority ethnic group membership and low socioeconomic status are correlated in Alum Rock. Mexican-Americans tend to have fewer years of education, lower family income, and lower occupational status than Anglos. Alum Rock's blacks are also underrepresented in the higher income levels, but compared with blacks elsewhere in the country, they are better educated and more affluent.

Alum Rock's poverty has been reflected in the school district's financial situation. At the start of the voucher demonstration, Alum Rock had one of the lowest assessed valuations per student among California districts of its size, less than \$6,000 as compared with a state average of over \$18,000.³ At the same time, its tax rate was \$4.82 per \$100 of assessed valuation while the median for the state was \$2.42.⁴

¹ Much of the Alum Rock population is transient. About 28 percent of the families surveyed in a special 1972 census had lived at their current addresses less than one year (Census of San Jose's East Side, California Department of Finance, Fall 1972).

² This compares with 48 percent for California as a whole.

³ The district's assessed valuation is almost entirely dependent on residential property.

⁴ These figures were calculated from data provided for the year 1971-72 by the California State Department of Education. Only elementary districts with an average daily attendance greater than 1,000 were included in the calculations. Property in California is assessed at 25 percent of the market value. As a result of SB-90, the California tax reform school finance act passed in 1972, the Alum Rock tax rate was reduced to \$3.99 for the 1977-78 school year.

During 1971-72, the district received almost 51 percent of its operating revenues from the state while the average for all districts in California was only 33 percent (Alum Rock School District, 1973). Its average expenditure per pupil was approximately \$850.

Politically, the Alum Rock community is heavily Democratic but largely unorganized. Traditionally, there has been little political activity centering on the schools in Alum Rock. There have been no Anglo political organizations focusing on school issues, although the local PTA has usually provided Anglo leadership in district affairs and is involved in district decisionmaking. The black population is dispersed and is not active in civic affairs, although the county's NAACP and Black Caucus have sometimes intervened in Alum Rock affairs, particularly with regard to the hiring of minority personnel. The most intensive community organizing in recent years has been concentrated in the Chicano community. The major activist Chicano group is La Confederacion de la Raza Unida, an umbrella group. One of the Confederacion's constituent groups, the Parents and Students of Alum Rock, has successfully lobbied the district for affirmative action in hiring and bilingual education. However, activist Chicano candidates have consistently been defeated in school board elections by middle-class Anglos.

Administratively, Alum Rock has a history of stable leadership. Its previous superintendent served from 1951-68. Dr. William Jefferds, the present superintendent, assumed the post in 1968 and has generally enjoyed good relations with the school board, the Alum Rock Educators Association, the Black Educators Association, the Chicano Educators Association, the district's administrators, and the community at large. An astute participant in state and national education politics, he was also instrumental in forming the State Coalition of Low Wealth School Districts, which lobbies for school finance reform in the California Legislature.

Jefferds bears the prime responsibility for bringing the voucher demonstration to Alum Rock. The prospect of a federally funded voucher demonstration appealed to him because it would bring more

money into the financially troubled district and might advance two policies he was already attempting to implement in the district: decentralization and parent participation in the schools.

Decentralization had been a key part of Jefferds's program since he became superintendent. When the district began to expand rapidly in the mid-1950s, many of Alum Rock's principals were young and inexperienced. Consequently, Jefferds's predecessor established a highly centralized system of authority.¹ By the time Jefferds took over in 1968, however, those same principals were more experienced and were eager to assume greater authority and independence. But opportunities for advancement in Alum Rock or its neighboring districts were limited because of the general leveling off of enrollments. Thus Jefferds concluded that it was time to enhance the administrative role of the principal.

Under the rubric of decentralization, Jefferds promoted a multifaceted plan for educational reform in the district. He sought to include not only principals, but also parents, community groups, and employee organizations in the district's decisionmaking. He instituted a program of training in interpersonal communications for school personnel. He also set up an advisory mechanism to detect and resolve conflicts likely to accompany change in the schools and community; an "outreach" program to federal and state agencies and universities for new educational ideas; and a search for extra money for hiring new personnel and training existing staff.

Jefferds's history of excellent relations with the district's teachers is particularly noteworthy as background to the voucher demonstration, for unlike the major national teachers' organizations and teachers in other districts that considered vouchers, Alum Rock's teachers' organizations did not oppose the voucher demonstration.

¹Veterans of Alum Rock's previous administration are fond of reporting that, under the previous superintendent, all Alum Rock students could be found studying the same page in the same book at the same time of day. While it is highly doubtful that this was literally true, it suggests that central control of the system was extremely strong.

Jefferds had always made special efforts to consult with teacher group leaders and had been willing to negotiate a wide variety of issues with certificated employee organizations in the district's "meet-and-confer" process.¹ During his tenure as superintendent, teachers' salaries had risen sharply and teacher suggestions had been taken seriously. Thus Alum Rock's teachers' willingness to go along with vouchers was in part an act of support for the superintendent. As one teachers' organization official told a Rand interviewer, "We support the Superintendent because he supports us."

For the Alum Rock public schools, the voucher demonstration provided an unprecedented opportunity to experiment with new ways of doing things, in a district that had barely been able to sustain a conventional program in the past. The voucher demonstration promised to advance significantly administrative decentralization in Alum Rock, thereby upgrading the status of principals and teachers as professional decisionmakers. As it turned out, it did not increase the power of Alum Rock's educational consumers as much as some voucher advocates—including the federal initiators of the project—had hoped.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Cincinnati is an older industrial city, with many of the problems that go with that status: increasing costs of urban services, a declining tax base, and loss of middle-class residents to the suburbs. Cincinnati's 1970 population was 450,000, a decline of 50,000 since 1960. The city has a large population of Catholics of German descent, many of whose children attend parochial schools. Situated just north of the Mason-Dixon line, Cincinnati's population also includes many southerners and people from Appalachia. Between 1960 and 1970, the percentage of blacks in the city's population increased from 22 to 27 percent.

¹California did not have collective bargaining for teachers until 1976.

Like many older cities, Cincinnati is a city of neighborhoods, which tend to be identifiable by race, ethnicity, and social class. A native can usually tell you what neighborhood you are in and where the next neighborhood begins. Active community associations or "forums" in each neighborhood serve to protect local interests on such matters as zoning, road construction, and the schools.

Civic affairs tend to be dominated by the business elite, including the heads of a number of major corporations headquartered in Cincinnati. A number of organizations focus their attention specifically on school-related issues. The School Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, a nonprofit citizens' group, undertakes independent studies on educational concerns.¹ Two groups have run slates for the Board of Education in recent years: the Citizens School Committee, representing a moderate-to-liberal constituency, and the Neighborhood Schools Committee, usually perceived as being conservative in approach.

The Cincinnati School District, like most urban districts, has experienced enrollment decline in recent years. Its student population went from 87,500 in the 1964-65 school year to 66,000 in 1976-77. As overall student population has declined, the proportion of black students has steadily increased, from 45 percent in 1970-71 to 51 percent in 1976-77. Cincinnati also has a large Catholic school system that enrolled approximately 20,000 students in 1976.

The district operates 97 schools--7 senior high schools, 16 junior high schools, and 74 elementary schools. Until the advent of an open enrollment plan (which permitted transfers if they would improve racial balance) and the first alternative schools in the fall of 1973, all of Cincinnati's schools were districted by local attendance areas, with the exception of Walnut Hills High School, a special college preparatory school for grades 7-12, open to all students who pass a special admissions test. Walnut Hills has a long and proud tradition of academic excellence in Cincinnati, and some people credit it with helping to retain professional and white-collar families within the city limits.

¹See, for example, the School Foundation of Greater Cincinnati (1972, 1977).

According to board members and administrators, the biggest problem facing the Cincinnati schools is financing. During the 1976-77 school year, Cincinnati spent an average of \$1,350 per student. State funds accounted for about 29 percent of its approximately \$88.4 million general fund budget, which was well below Ohio's contribution to its average district. Because of recent property tax levy defeats, Cincinnati, along with a number of other Ohio districts, faces a financial crisis which may require the closing of schools for part of the 1978-79 school year. In December 1977, in a court suit brought by the Cincinnati district, Ohio's system of school finance was ruled unconstitutional. The state is expected to appeal the decision.

A second major educational issue in Cincinnati, one that underlies the story of alternatives, is school desegregation. In 1963, the Cincinnati Board of Education successfully defended a desegregation suit brought by the NAACP. The federal district court found, and the Court of Appeals affirmed, "that neither gerrymandering nor any other alleged discriminatory practice on the part of the Board brought about such racial imbalance as existed...."¹

Nonetheless, in the early 1970s, a liberal school board began to take steps to reduce the racial isolation of Cincinnati's schools. In 1972, it hired a new superintendent, Dr. Donald Waldrip, who had recently been involved in desegregating the schools in Wichita Falls, Texas, and who appeared to favor integration and to be educationally innovative. In March 1973, the board adopted a policy

...that quality integrated education is the highest goal of the Cincinnati Public Schools. While this purpose shall remain clear, devices used to achieve this goal may vary with time and circumstances. Whenever a relevant decision is to be made, the potential for achieving integration shall be assigned a high priority.²

¹Deal vs. Cincinnati Board of Education, 244 F. Supp. 572 (S.D. Ohio 1965), aff'd 369 F. 2355 (6th Cir. 1966).

²Cincinnati Board of Education Minutes, March 26, 1973.

That summer, Waldrip unveiled plans for an open enrollment scheme that would allow students to attend any district school with available space, providing the transfers would improve racial balance. He also initiated a plan for achieving staff racial balance by encouraging voluntary transfers and assigning new teachers on the basis of race. The administration also began planning the city's first two alternative schools for the 1973-74 school year, with the provision that admissions would be regulated to promote racial balance.

In the November 1973 school board election, four members of the liberal board were defeated by a slate of candidates running on a "neighborhood schools" platform. In December, the lame-duck board passed a resolution to abolish existing school attendance area lines and to assign students to schools so that each one would reflect the 50 percent black, 50 percent white racial makeup of the district. Upon taking office in January, the more conservative board did not formally rescind the previous board's resolution but did affirm its intention of developing quality integrated education within the framework of a neighborhood schools policy.

In May 1974, the NAACP initiated a new lawsuit charging the Cincinnati board with racial and economic segregation,¹ and asked the Court to order the board to carry out the resolution passed by the previous board. The case has been several years in pretrial judicial maneuverings, and, in the fall of 1976, all districts in the county and the State Department of Education were made co-defendants in the suit.

Bronson is likely to be tried sometime in 1978. A key element in the board's defense strategy is its pursuit of voluntary integration through alternative schools. Cincinnati's alternative schools currently enroll approximately 9,000 students.

¹ *Mona Bronson et al. v. Board of Education of the City School District of Cincinnati et al.*, District Court, Civil No. Cl 74-205.

In the spring of 1976, Superintendent Waldrip resigned under pressure from the board.¹ The ostensible reason for his resignation, as reported in the local press, was the board's dissatisfaction with his performance as an administrator, especially in the area of financial management.²

The board appointed Dr. James Jacobs, the district's assistant superintendent for research and development, to serve as interim superintendent while they undertook a nationwide search for someone to replace Waldrip. After a year-long search, they had not found an acceptable candidate from outside the district, and in February 1977 Jacobs was officially named as superintendent.

Thus there has been a certain amount of administrative instability in the Cincinnati public schools in recent years. When Waldrip took office, he instituted an administrative decentralization plan, creating four area directors for elementary education and two for secondary. These new positions were designed to give school principals a single contact in the central office, and thereby facilitate their dealings with the district administration. At the same time, by promoting a number of principals (including several black principals) to these new positions, Waldrip installed a new echelon of administrators loyal to him, and bypassed other central office administrators who might not have fully supported his programs.

With the recent change in administration, the status of this decentralization plan is in doubt. A reorganization study is currently under way in the district. As we will see, it is against this background of organizational flux that the district has had to develop its policies for alternative schools.

¹He is being retained by the district as a consultant on alternative schools until his contract expires in 1978.

²*Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 22, 1976. Some observers have pointed to ideological differences between the liberal superintendent and the conservative board, over desegregation strategies and other matters, as another contributing factor in the resignation.

Until recently, organized teachers did not wield much influence in Cincinnati. In 1976, of the district's 2,600 teachers, about 900 belonged to the Cincinnati Teachers' Association (affiliated with the NEA) and about 600 belonged to the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT). In December 1976, the CFT for the first time won the right to represent all the district's teachers in collective bargaining negotiations with the board. In the spring of 1977, when the school board announced that for the third consecutive year revenues were inadequate to cover a salary increase for teachers, the CFT called a strike which lasted four weeks. The settlement boosted teacher salaries an average 6 percent.¹

Prior to the initiation of alternative schools, the Cincinnati district had some experience with implementing various types of educational innovations. A central office team of instructional specialists introduced various new curriculum packages to the schools. There was some experimentation with nongrading and team teaching in the elementary schools. The district's Research and Development Department developed a computer-based, diagnostic-prescriptive system for managing individualized instruction that is used in some schools. The precursors of a number of Cincinnati's current alternative schools may be found in earlier externally funded innovative projects.

The chapters to come explain how the social, political, legal, financial, organizational, and educational elements of the Cincinnati setting that we have summarized here have interacted to shape its system of alternatives.

Eugene, Oregon

Eugene, Oregon, is a growing city of about 95,000 in the Willamette Valley of western Oregon. Students of the University of Oregon account for about 15 percent of the city's population. Eugene

¹ Teachers were to have received an additional 3 percent increase if a June 1977 tax levy measure had passed, but it was defeated.

is also a logging and lumber processing center and a distribution point for products entering the Pacific Northwest. Most of Eugene's population is middle-class and white.

Eugene citizens tend to regard themselves as a strongly independent, and to value the tradition of popular participation in government for which Oregon is noted. The university contributes to a generally liberal atmosphere on many political and social issues, but there is also a strain of fiscal conservatism in the city. The outdoors is an important part of Eugene's lifestyle, and environmental concerns are taken seriously. A recent study by the Midwest Research Institute compared the quality of life among American cities, as measured by criteria such as air and water pollution, availability of medical and social services, recreational facilities, and support for education (Gentle, 1976). Eugene ranked number one among cities of its size. Many Eugene residents express concern that real estate developers and outsiders flocking in to share "the good life" will destroy what is special about Eugene and turn it into a "mini-Los Angeles."

Oregon School District 4J serves the city of Eugene and several adjacent unincorporated areas. It enrolls approximately 20,000 students in 31 elementary schools, 8 junior high schools, and 4 high schools. Minority students make up about 4 percent of the district's total enrollment. Student population in the district has declined slightly in recent years, and there has been a marked shift in the geographic distribution of students toward newly developed areas in the northern and southwestern parts of the district. Thus, older school buildings in south Eugene tend to be underenrolled, while newer schools in rapidly growing areas to the north and southwest are often overcrowded.

Civic affairs in Eugene tend to be dominated by the business, professional, and academic people who are concentrated in the older neighborhoods of south Eugene, near the University campus. Until recently, most of District 4J's school board members came from this part of the city (current representation on the board is more

geographically balanced), as does most of the district's support in budget elections. Oregon law provides that each school district must submit its operating budget to the public for approval every year, not only when an increase in tax levies is sought, as in most other states. Strong support for school taxes in south Eugene usually compensates for heavy negative voting in the newer unincorporated areas in the northern part of the district. It is not uncommon, however, for several budget elections to be necessary before approval is finally won. Consequently, the budget development and campaign process absorbs a great deal of the time and energies of school district administrators every year; almost as soon as one budget is passed, they must begin developing and then holding public hearings on the following year's budget.

Eugene's District 4J does not have many of the problems of larger urban districts with large numbers of poor and minority youngsters. In 1975-76 it spent \$1,600 per student and maintained a student/teacher ratio of 18.4/1.¹ In most of its schools, students score at or above national norms on standardized achievement tests. This reflects in part the social and economic status of the community.

The district has a tradition of being educationally progressive. As one principal put it, "There has always been a norm for innovation here." During the early 1960s, under its previous superintendent, it was one of several districts that participated in a major Ford Foundation project to introduce innovative curriculum approaches, such as the inquiry method, into the classroom. Many of Eugene's teachers participated at that time in intensive summer in-service workshops with nationally recognized curriculum experts. Eugene was also one of five districts in the nation included in the federally funded Impact Program (1970-72), designed to integrate the arts into the

¹In computing this ratio, all certificated staff--for example, counselors, reading specialists, media specialists--as well as regular classroom teachers are included. The actual size of most classes is thus larger than this ratio would suggest.

elementary school program.¹ In 1969, one of its junior high schools pioneered an innovative approach to adolescent education that has attracted considerable attention from educators across the nation.²

Despite the reforms of the 1960s, when District 4J's superintendent retired in 1973 after 14 years of service, many people felt that the schools had become rigid and stagnant. The school board, most of whose members are considered educational "liberals," held a series of meetings to obtain community views about the future direction of Eugene's schools and the search for a new superintendent. What they heard expressed were desires for more "humanistic" and "open" education,³ and, in general, a top administrator who could inject new life into the system. The successful candidate for the job was Dr. Thomas Payzant, a thirty-two-year-old graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Then serving as superintendent in a small suburban district near Philadelphia, he had achieved a reputation for innovativeness and had helped start a number of educational alternatives.

The four years that Payzant has spent in Eugene have been anything but calm. In the process of trying to generate change in the schools, the new superintendent has generated considerable controversy, including two unsuccessful board recall elections.⁴ Some see him as

¹Several of that project's staff form the core of Eugene's present Magnet Arts Alternative School.

²Roosevelt Junior High's program is based on a completely elective curriculum, no grade levels, written evaluations instead of letter grades, and assignment of students to faculty advisors who help them plan individualized schedules. Because this school was operating before Eugene officially began its alternatives, it is not considered an alternative school by the district. However, 22 percent of the school's students are drawn from outside its attendance area, under the district's open enrollment policy.

³In the latter half of the 1960s, Eugene's "counterculture" spawned a number of private "free school" alternatives, some of which were associated with communes. None of these schools has survived, but some of their former patrons and staff have been active in the formation of Eugene's public alternatives.

⁴The first board recall election revolved around the issue of free public kindergartens, which are optional in Oregon, and which were not offered in Eugene when Dr. Payzant was hired in 1973. Until then, kindergarten funding had been presented to the voters separately

an able manager and change agent, willing to make tough decisions and take risks to shake up a complacent system. Others regard him as an outsider, a "young man on the move" who talks the language of participatory decisionmaking but sometimes exercises power in an authoritarian way.

The creation of alternative schools was an early, important, and sometimes controversial element in Payzant's program of school reform and will be analyzed in detail in the next several chapters. Here we summarize some of the other changes that occurred in the district during the same period.

During his first school year in Eugene, Payzant announced a major administrative reorganization of the district, eliminating a large number of central office curriculum coordinator positions and creating four regional directors to whom principals would report. While most people we spoke with now seem reasonably satisfied with the decentralization scheme, there was considerable bad feeling--that has not entirely subsided--about the way the curriculum coordinators were treated. The in-service and curriculum development functions that the curriculum coordinators had served were supposed to be carried on by a new Teacher Center, which was never successfully implemented (see Chapter IV for further discussion of the Teacher

from the rest of the school budget and had consistently been voted down. Payzant included kindergartens in his overall budget and refused to eliminate them even after the budget went down to defeat twice. The budget was passed on the third try, but angry citizens attempted to recall the board over this issue.

The second board recall election resulted after Payzant, in the spring of 1976, transferred three of Eugene's high school principals to junior high positions and replaced them with junior high principals. Such a transfer was totally unprecedented in the district, and was viewed by some as a strategy to displace key members of the "old guard" who stood in the way of the superintendent's reforms. The action generated immediate uproar in the community and separate lawsuits against the district by the high school principals and by a group of citizens claiming the board had violated open meeting laws. The district lost both cases and is appealing the court's decision on the transfer case. In the meantime, the six administrators remain in their new assignments.

Center). Responsibility for curriculum development and in-service now rests instead with a curriculum specialist in each of the four regions. Some have criticized this arrangement for failing to provide the district with overall direction in the area of curriculum.

As part of his reorganization plan, Payzant created a Department of Research, Development, and Evaluation, charged with moving the district toward more data-based decisionmaking. The district also began to publish test scores by school in the local newspaper, a practice that has drawn mixed reaction from school staff.

Another item on Payzant's agenda was enhancing problem-solving skills throughout the organization. In the winter of 1974, he hired a full time organization development specialist to coordinate the work of the district's Communications Cadre. This is a voluntary team of teachers and administrators that works with groups of staff in schools and the central office to improve communications skills and problem-solving processes. The Cadre had existed under Payzant's predecessor, but had not had this degree of administrative support. After a year in the Research, Development, and Evaluation Department, the organization development specialist was reassigned to work directly out of the superintendent's office, an arrangement which still prevails. The district's commitment to developing group problem-solving skills is evident even in the superintendent's cabinet meetings, where the position of convenor is assigned on a rotating basis, and part of every meeting is devoted to discussing the group's process.

District 4J instituted another major new policy in the 1975-76 school year: a "staffing parity" plan that equalized student/teacher ratios across all grade levels to a uniform 18.4/1. This plan met with serious opposition in the high schools, which had traditionally held the most power in the district and enjoyed a larger than average share of the district's teaching resources. Related staffing issues, such as the proper degree of school-level autonomy in allocating staff positions (e.g., between classroom and specialist teachers at the elementary level), have arisen in the course of the continuing debate over staffing ratios.

Eugene's teachers are represented in negotiations with the district by the Eugene Education Association (EEA), an NEA affiliate. Both teacher spokesmen and board members have noted increasingly formalized and sometimes strained relations between teachers and management since collective bargaining began in Eugene several years ago. In the fall of 1975, a threatened strike was settled two days before school opened. While the association has a broad-based membership (there is also a very small AFT affiliate), most teachers do not seem very involved in its activities, perhaps because their salaries are high compared to those in neighboring districts, and Eugene is generally considered a good district in which to work.

In the next chapter, we will see how educational alternatives were initiated in Eugene and how they fit into the context just described.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Minneapolis is a city of approximately 400,000 in a metropolitan area of 1.6 million that includes its Twin City, the state capital of St. Paul. Minneapolis is the urban hub of a large agricultural region, and grain milling is a primary industry. The national headquarters of several major corporations are located there, and the business community provides active support for civic, cultural, and educational projects. In the mid-1960s, Minneapolis embarked on a major program of urban redevelopment that transformed much of its downtown into modern business and shopping facilities, pedestrian malls, and architecturally acclaimed cultural institutions. The past decade also witnessed a flurry of new building at the University of Minnesota, in southeast Minneapolis.

Most Minneapolis residents are of northern European extraction, including many Scandinavians, Germans, and Poles. The city's black population grew from 2.4 percent of the total population in 1960 to 4.3 percent in 1970, but is still low compared to most other large American cities. Native Americans constituted about 1.3 percent of the city's population in 1970, three times more than a decade earlier.

Enrollment in the Minneapolis public schools declined from 65,000 in 1971 to 53,000 in 1976, and during that period, the percentage of minority students grew from just under 15 percent to slightly over 20 percent. After a number of school closings and consolidations, the district now operates 82 schools: 10 high schools, 12 junior high schools, and 60 elementary schools. Expenditures per pupil in 1976-77 were about \$1,735 (Minneapolis Public Schools, 1977).

The period of Minneapolis's social and economic resurgence that began in the mid-1960s also marked the beginning of a time of change and revitalization for the city's public schools. At the start of that period, the district was plagued by a number of familiar problems: declining test scores, inadequate finances, old and inadequate buildings, and instructional needs of a growing minority population. The superintendent, nearly twenty years in office, presided over a central staff that was relatively isolated from the schools. In the words of a former board member, "As long as a principal kept things quiet in his school, he was considered to be doing a good job." The system provided few opportunities for teachers and principals to grow professionally, and there was little encouragement to try new things. There were also signs of mounting community dissatisfaction with the schools.

All this began to change when an activist, reform-minded majority gained control of the school board in 1964. At first they tried to influence the superintendent to take some new directions, and even made some key administrative appointments against his wishes. Finally they convinced him to agree to early retirement, and began a nationwide search for a new superintendent to "turn the system around." The man they hired was Dr. John Davis, then superintendent in Worcester, Massachusetts, who served in Minneapolis from 1967-75 and spearheaded efforts to carry out the board's mandate for change.

Davis started a program of reforms in the district, in which educational alternatives later became one important element. Initially, one of the top items on his agenda was reversing the district's financial position. He employed a skillful lobbyist to enlist the aid of the state legislature, and over the course of the next ten years state

aid to the district tripled, and the legislature authorized the sale of special bonds to finance a major school building program. He also created a cabinet-level position of federal projects director, to lead a more concerted effort to attract federal funds. Davis himself solicited the aid of local business interests and foundations for various district initiatives. The strong support of the city's informal power structure contributed importantly to Davis's ability to initiate basic changes in the school system.

Another key strategy for improving the Minneapolis schools was increasing the sense of professionalism and responsibility among all its staff, from the central office to the classroom. The administrative mechanism for achieving this goal was decentralization. At first two pilot "pyramids of responsibility" were created, each a decentralized management unit consisting of a high school and all its feeder schools. In 1973, the district was divided into three administrative areas, each containing several such pyramids. Decisions about budget, personnel, and curriculum that used to reside in the central office began to be delegated to area superintendents and in turn to principals. The pyramid structure was also intended to increase opportunities for parent/community participation in school decisionmaking.

The district began to place greater value on innovativeness and risk-taking. It encouraged school staffs to submit proposals for federal Title III funding.¹ Numerous grants were obtained to support such local projects as "Urban Arts" (using artistic resources in the community to incorporate drama, dance, music, and art into the school curriculum) and "Eliminating Sex Bias in Education." To provide teachers with the skills to implement alternatives and other educational innovations, the district joined with the University of Minnesota in forming a Teacher Center (see Chapter IV). Another district commitment to the professional growth of the teaching staff was the initiation

¹Title III (now Title IVC) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provided for federal support of innovative educational projects in local school districts.

of an early release day for students every Tuesday, providing teachers with several hours of staff development sessions. Many of these sessions were reserved for dealing with human relations issues arising out of the district's desegregation efforts.

In June 1971, the district received a \$6.5 million, five-year federal Experimental Schools grant to attempt comprehensive school change. The project, Southeast Alternatives, turned four neighborhood elementary schools and a junior-senior high into a cluster of alternative schools. Southeast Alternatives was to become the model for the creation of alternative schools in other parts of the city beginning in 1973 (both Southeast Alternatives and the city-wide alternatives effort are discussed at length in Chapter IV).

The city-wide development of alternatives in Minneapolis was intimately tied to the district's efforts to desegregate its schools. In 1967 the school board had adopted Human Relations Guidelines stating that an integrated education was a better education, that racial isolation was educationally harmful, and that the school district should make every reasonable effort to eliminate segregation in the schools. A voluntary transfer program was started to foster racial balance. In 1970, the board adopted stronger "Human Relations Guidelines for the 1970's," defining a quality school, in part, as one "in which the racial composition of the student body approximates the racial composition of the total student population in the Minneapolis Public Schools."

In April 1971, the Minnesota Commissioner of Education notified the Minneapolis district that seventeen of its schools had unacceptably large concentrations of minority students (over 30 percent) and instructed the district to develop a desegregation plan. At about the same time, a class action lawsuit was filed against the district, charging intentional policies resulting in unlawful racial segregation. The administration and board spent the next year developing a plan and, in April 1972, shortly before the court case was to be

decided, the board adopted a desegregation/integration plan.¹ The Court approved the board's plan, with minor revisions, commended the plan's attention to staff development and human relations training, and ordered it implemented in stages over three years, as outlined in the plan. Since then, in accordance with the plan, school boundary changes have been made; schools have been closed, paired, or clustered; and new attendance areas have been drawn. Alternative programs have been offered within desegregating clusters of schools, to give parents educational choices that are intended to make desegregation more palatable and to improve the quality of education. A revised court order now sets the maximum minority enrollment for city schools at 42 percent, provided that no single minority accounts for more than 35 percent. As of the 1976-77 school year, all but a few of the city's schools were in compliance, and the district was taking steps to correct the few cases of imbalance.

A major program of school construction was linked to the district's desegregation goals and the creation of alternatives. Minneapolis has constructed three large, modern educational complexes known as "expanded community schools." Two of the three enroll about eighteen hundred elementary students each, and offer three distinct educational programs (contemporary continuous progress, and modified open) in physically discrete sections of one large building.² These complexes are located within or close to inner city neighborhoods. Children

¹As noted in a district publication, "'Desegregation' is always separated from 'integration' by a slash (desegregation/integration). This shows that Minneapolis believes that physically moving students can accomplish desegregation but not integration. By moving students, minority percentages can be lowered, but integration efforts are aimed at creating a climate of mutual trust, respect, and acceptance of differences among students and faculty." (Minneapolis Public Schools, 1975, p. 11.)

²The third complex houses two separate schools, one for grades K-3 and one for grades 4-6, of 600 students each. Both schools use a continuous progress approach.

who formerly attended one of a cluster of smaller, older, and segregated¹ facilities are bused to the impressive new complexes, and have their choice among its alternative offerings.

To support "integration"--changes in attitudes and behaviors to increase acceptance and respect for individuals of various backgrounds--the district created an Indian Education Department, an Ethnic Cultural Center, and a Women's Studies Department. All produce curriculum materials and provide training for teachers and staff.

Increasing citizen support for and involvement in the schools has been another priority in the Minneapolis district in recent years. A Citizens' Accountability Project, funded by the state, has studied and reported to the board on a variety of issues ranging from community participation in the schools to student discipline. Each area superintendent works with an advisory council made up of parents and other citizens. Community participation in school governance was a major goal and accomplishment of the Southeast Alternatives project (see Chapter IV). Since 1968, the district has also developed a vast program of "community education" involving over seventy of its buildings in providing classes and services to community residents, from pre-schoolers to senior citizens.

Minneapolis teachers are represented in negotiations with the district by the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, an AFT affiliate. Throughout his tenure as superintendent, John Davis enjoyed excellent relations with the Minneapolis teacher organizations. He made a practice of consulting teacher leadership in advance on major policy decisions. Improving district financial fortunes were also reflected in teacher salary increases.

This summary of developments in the Minneapolis schools should not give the impression that change was total, easy, rapid, or universally supported. Superintendent Davis has noted that the process of change in the district was slow, complicated, and sometimes beset

¹Minority enrollments in these schools ranged from 1 percent to 80 percent.

by frustration and conflict. In 1971, two new members of the seven-member school board were elected on an anti-Davis and anti-desegregation platform. They received support from a blue-collar constituency that felt underrepresented in the liberal, reformist board that was moving quickly for change. Without the united backing of the board, new initiatives became more difficult to implement. By the time Davis resigned in 1975, he had won the respect and often the support of both these opposition board members, but the board had definitely adopted a more skeptical stance toward administrative policies and judgments.

When Superintendent Davis resigned to assume the presidency of a nearby college, the board appointed an outside search committee to identify potential successors. While reiterating the district's five priority goals--basic skills instruction, decentralization, educational alternatives, integration, and staff development--the board also emphasized the need for a tough fiscal manager to deal with the problems of declining enrollment and financial pressures. After a year (during which the Associate Superintendent for Business Affairs served as acting superintendent), a new superintendent was hired: Dr. Raymond Arveson, the superintendent in Hayward, California, who had acquired a reputation for effectively handling several school closings and budget cuts in that district.

In the spring of 1976, before Arveson officially took over in Minneapolis, the district went through a difficult period of budget-cutting, which some have characterized as traumatic. The sense of common purpose that had been carefully nurtured throughout the organization in the previous decade apparently deteriorated somewhat, as various divisions and administrative areas started squabbling to protect their own interests. It is difficult to tell yet what effect these budget cuts will have on programs.

Under Arveson, district commitments to alternatives, desegregation/integration, administrative decentralization, and improving basic skills have been continued. The district has also launched a major effort to improve school discipline. Several fundamentals schools

have been added to the range of elementary alternatives offered. Recognition that additional innovations would have to be funded outside the shrinking local budget has led to greater efforts to obtain federal, state, and private grants.

Some observers have noted that the spirit of innovativeness and risk-taking is not as strong in the Minneapolis school district as it was several years ago. This change has been variously attributed to a change in leadership style of the superintendent, the district's financial difficulties, and the need for a calmer period of consolidation following a hectic period of difficult changes. In Chapter V, we will examine the status of educational alternatives in light of the district's present administrative and financial situation.

Summary

This chapter has briefly introduced our four sample districts. A few key features of each site should be underscored as background for the initiation of alternatives:

- o Alum Rock in 1972 was a financially pressed district serving a predominantly minority and poor community that was not very active in school affairs. It had a strong and popular superintendent whose goals included administrative decentralization and increased community participation in the schools.
- o Cincinnati, with approximately equal numbers of black and white students, has faced continuing litigation and community dissension over the issue of desegregation in recent years. In 1974, a liberal school board was replaced by a conservative one pledged to preserve neighborhood schools. The last five years have also been marked by two changes of superintendent and serious financial difficulties for the district.

- o Eugene's School District 4J serves a predominantly white, middle-class community. Its schools are adequately funded, have relatively small class sizes, and have traditionally kept up with the latest educational trends. In 1973, its school board hired a dynamic young superintendent and gave him a mandate to institute a number of organizational and educational changes in the district.
- o The Minneapolis Public Schools, with the appointment of a new superintendent in 1967, began a decade of multifaceted reform including administrative decentralization, greater citizen participation in school governance, an extensive building program, and a variety of educational innovations. With minority students making up about 20 percent of its enrollment, the district has also desegregated its schools in compliance with a 1972 court order.

As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, these differing situations gave rise to quite different systems of educational alternatives.

III. INITIATION AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Having sketched the background of our four sample districts, we now turn to a discussion of the origins of alternatives in each. The initiation phase of an innovation lays the groundwork for the implementation activities to follow. Initiation involves generating the idea to try something new, defining goals, mobilizing support among staff and community, formulating preliminary plans, allocating resources, and establishing an administrative framework for the project. What happens during initiation has a special significance because it defines the ground rules within which future developments will take place. As we shall see, the decisions a district makes when it initiates alternatives, as well as the ways in which it makes these decisions, will greatly influence eventual project outcomes.

Because alternatives represent, in effect, a system of innovations, rather than a single innovation, "initiation" may be used to refer either to the initial phase of the general alternatives policy (the sense in which we have been using it so far) or to the initiation of individual programs. In all of the districts we studied, some new alternatives have been established when the original alternative programs were well along in the implementation process, so their "initiations" took place after the overall initiation phase for the district has ended. We found, however, that the process for initiating these additional programs tended to be the same as that for the original programs, so we have included, as part of this chapter's discussion of initiation, a discussion of each district's characteristic process for establishing programs, including those begun at later stages.

Since the initiation of alternatives is rooted in the unique circumstances of each district, we have organized this chapter as four separate short case studies. At the end of the chapter, we will compare the four alternatives systems in terms of their goals, local support, commitment of resources, methods for establishing new programs, and types of programs attempted, thereby setting the stage for

Chapter IV's analysis of major management issues faced by these districts in the implementation of alternatives.

Alum Rock

Educational alternatives in Alum Rock came about as a result of that district's participation from 1972 to 1977 in the education voucher demonstration funded by the federal government (first by OEO and later by NIE). As described in Chapter I, the government wanted to test a new model for organizing and financing public education, in which tax money would be allocated directly to educational consumers (children and their parents) in the form of vouchers. These education vouchers would be used to pay for enrolling children at the public or private schools of their choice. Because the financial survival of schools would thus depend on their ability to attract and retain students, it was argued that the public schools would have a new economic incentive (which private schools presumably already had) to be responsive to their clientele. Diversity of educational offerings might be expected to increase under such a market system, but only if it turned out that consumers wanted different kinds of educational programs.

In the summer of 1970, OEO engaged the Center for the Study of Public Policy (CSPP) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to contact local school districts around the nation to interest them in conducting a voucher demonstration. Dr. William Jefferds, the Alum Rock superintendent, heard a CSPP field representative explain the voucher concept and saw a potential opportunity for furthering the district's goals of administrative decentralization and parental participation, as well as for obtaining substantial federal funds at a time when the district was sorely in need of revenue. Alternatives per se were not a part of the district's educational agenda at that point.

Jefferds discussed the voucher idea with the Alum Rock Board of Trustees and received its authorization to apply to OEO for a grant to conduct a feasibility study. In February 1971, the district

received a \$19,230 grant and the board and superintendent appointed a broad-based citizens' committee, including parents, teachers, and representatives of business and minority groups, to carry out the study.

Public hearings held to debate the voucher issue drew large turnouts, but the response was overwhelmingly negative. Opinion surveys conducted among staff and community members reflected a mixed picture. In the spring of 1971, about 60 percent of Alum Rock teachers agreed that the district "should continue to explore the voucher plan as a possible course of action" (Center for Planning and Evaluation, 1971). Given public opposition to vouchers by the NEA, its California branch, the California Teachers Association (CTA), and the AFT, Alum Rock teachers might have been expected to oppose vouchers. However, Alum Rock's teacher organizations--the Alum Rock Educators Association, an NEA and CTA affiliate, and the local chapter of the AFT--were mildly supportive of the demonstration, provided that certain noxious elements of vouchers (threats to job security, private school participation) were removed. This support was probably attributable both to the teachers groups' excellent relations with the superintendent and to their independent and reform-minded leadership.

Only a third of the parents surveyed during the feasibility study considered themselves well informed about the voucher plan. One quarter said they would want their children to participate in such a program (Center for Planning and Evaluation, 1971). CSPP dispatched a field agent, Dr. Joel Levin, to Alum Rock to try to mobilize minority-group support for vouchers, especially among the large Mexican-American population, but his efforts met with little success.

The feasibility study also discovered that there would be little potential for Alum Rock students to enroll in private, parochial, or neighboring district schools as part of a voucher plan. There were no nondenominational private schools within ten miles of Alum Rock. Local parochial schools were interested in voucher participation, but feared it would curtail their authority over curriculum and

admissions, and it was clear that the constitutionality of their involvement would be challenged.

Nonetheless, Superintendent Jefferds and federal representatives were intent on keeping the voucher idea alive in Alum Rock. During this period, proposed legislation was pending in California that would permit state funds to be spent in private schools in a voucher demonstration.¹ Fearing that the local study committee was about to vote the project down, Jefferds and other voucher supporters proposed that the committee recommend that the school board delay its own decision on vouchers until the legislature had acted. The committee acceded and, in April 1971, the board declared a temporary moratorium on further discussion of the voucher plan.

By early 1972, the California legislature still had not enacted legislation that would permit private school participation in a voucher plan, and OEO was under Congressional pressure to commence a voucher demonstration or lose further planning monies (several other districts had conducted feasibility studies and decided against vouchers).² In January, Superintendent Jefferds met with Jeffry Schiller, OEO's Director of Experimental Research, and they jointly developed the concept of a "transition" voucher model that would offer parents choices among public schools only. For the district, such a plan would retain the most appealing features of vouchers (federal money, decentralization) and avoid much of the controversy (private school participation). For OEO, the plan would at least keep the voucher notion alive, and there was the hope that private schools would eventually be able to participate in the demonstration. In early March, the Alum Rock Board of Trustees unanimously authorized Superintendent Jefferds to prepare a formal proposal to OEO that embodied the transition voucher model.

¹The California legislature defeated voucher bills in 1970, 1971, and 1972, before finally passing the so-called Demonstration Scholarship Act in 1973. See Weiler et al. (1974a, pp. 66-67; 1974b, pp. 93-104).

²The problems of finding a district willing to undertake a voucher demonstration are addressed in McCann (1972) and Cohen and Farrar (1977).

At this point, the specifics of the plan had to be worked out. Dr. Levin, the CSPP field representative, convened a three-day conference attended by parents, teachers, and principals from six prospective voucher schools, district central staff, teacher organization representatives, and OEO officials. Each group had specific interests to protect and, through a process of negotiation and compromise, the outlines of the Alum Rock Transition Voucher Proposal emerged.

To the surprise of some voucher proponents, the greatest concern of Alum Rock parents at the conference was insuring their children's right to continue attending their neighborhood schools. The parents won a "squatters' rights" provision, which said that all children currently attending a given school, and their younger siblings not yet in school, would be guaranteed a place in that school. To provide for greater educational diversity (the six original voucher schools were in fact quite similar to each other) and to enable parents to have choices within their neighborhood schools, Jeffry Schiller of OEO proposed that each voucher school divide into at least two distinct programs or mini-schools. His suggestion was supported by parents and adopted.

Despite the resistance of principals, Superintendent Jefferds and OEO representatives agreed on the creation of a new central staff unit to supervise the demonstration, with special responsibilities for providing parents with information and for conducting an evaluation of the project. The conference planners also provided for an Education Voucher Advisory Committee (EVAC), composed of equal numbers of parents and school staff, to oversee the demonstration and advise the school board about it.

Two months later, in the hopes that a voucher demonstration would eventually materialize, Jefferds began a program to ready the staff for the changes that such an effort would entail. The year before, the district had begun a program of organization development training

to familiarize some of its officials with the decentralization process.¹ The Center for Human Resources and Organizational Development (HRC), a private consulting firm, had been hired to conduct the training. In June 1971, Jefferds asked OEO to support an expanded HRC program of organization development and managerial training for the district, arguing that principals and school staffs would need enhanced communication and problem-solving skills to effectively carry out both decentralization and other organizational changes envisioned by a voucher plan. OEO provided a grant, stipulating that the HRC training relate to the district's interest in implementing a voucher plan. In the fall of 1971, HRC began working with six school staffs and principals who wanted to participate in the decentralization process. These individuals had made no formal commitment to vouchers, but all of the schools that joined the demonstration a year later had received HRC training.

Teachers' representatives, concerned about job security, prevailed upon OEO to include a \$35,000 teacher contract buy-up fund in their grant, to be used as a last resort to pay the salaries of any teachers displaced by the demonstration and unable to find employment elsewhere in the district. Principals won funding for additional administrative assistance at the school sites. OEO persuaded the district to agree to allow the voucher schools to purchase certain district support services (psychologists, curriculum coordinators, audiovisual services) at their own discretion, rather than automatically supplying them to the schools. And OEO also provided a \$15,000 fund to aid in the planning of community-initiated alternative schools.

¹Schmuck and Miles define organization development as "a planned and sustained effort to apply behavioral science for system improvement, using reflective, self-analytic methods...the primary concern of OD is with such matters as adequate organizational communication, the integration of individual and organizational goals, the development of a climate of trust in decisionmaking, and the effect of the reward system on morale...[it] involves system members themselves in the assessment, diagnosis and transformation of their own organization" (Schmuck and Miles, 1971, p. 2).

The Transition Model Voucher Proposal (see Weiler et al., 1974b) that emerged from the conference provided that each student would receive a basic voucher, worth the then current average per pupil cost in Alum Rock, and that disadvantaged students would also receive an additional "compensatory" voucher.¹ Parents would choose a mini-school (program) for each child, with each child assured his or her first choice program. Where possible, additional space would be created at oversubscribed buildings through use of portable classrooms; otherwise, over-applied programs were to be expanded to additional buildings. Theoretically, a program's budget would be determined by its enrollment, i.e., by the total of basic and compensatory vouchers to which its students were entitled.²

The proposal received unanimous approval from the Alum Rock Board of Trustees on April 12, 1972, and was accepted by OEO later that month with a two-year funding commitment.³ The district's agreement with OEO included a promise "to expand the program to include approximately 8,000 to 10,000 students (total) the second year, if the demonstration is successful." Only five weeks had elapsed between the board's instructions to prepare a proposal and final approval. While the speed with which the plan was undertaken caused some subsequent implementation problems, the superintendent has remarked that additional planning time would have provided more opportunity for opposition to mobilize.

¹In the first year of the demonstration, the basic voucher (funded from local and state sources) was worth \$788 for an elementary student and \$1,041 for a middle school student (grades 7 and 8). The federally funded compensatory vouchers were worth approximately \$238 and \$302 per eligible student at the elementary and middle school levels, respectively. "Disadvantaged students" were defined as those students who, based on their parents' incomes, were eligible for the federal free lunch program.

²In practice, the rules for allocating funds to schools and mini-schools became considerably more complicated and represented one of the major technical problems of implementation. See Weiler et al. (1974a, pp. 51-56) and Furry (1976).

³For the 1972-73 school year, the federal grant to Alum Rock totaled \$1,585,756. Over the course of the demonstration, federal support has amounted to approximately \$8.5 million.

The superintendent appointed CSPP's Dr. Joel Levin to become his special staff assistant and director of the voucher project. As specified in the OEO contract, there would be, in addition to the project director, voucher staff coordinators for parent counseling, information, and research and evaluation. Rather than make the voucher staff part of the district administration, Jefferds contracted for the services of the Sequoia Institute, a nonprofit corporation organized by Levin and some of his associates for this purpose. In this way, Jefferds hoped to emphasize the temporary nature of the voucher staff and thereby allay the concerns of principals and other staff opposed to the creation of a powerful new central staff unit in a period of decentralization. Levin would have no direct line authority over principals or schools.

Levin hired two Chicanos and a black as his voucher coordinators. All three were new to the district, unacquainted with each other, and as yet unfamiliar with the voucher concept. They and Levin were perceived by the voucher principals as outsiders more loyal to the concept of sovereignty for educational consumers than to the Alum Rock public schools, and were destined to clash with the principals over how the voucher plan would be put into practice.

In March and April 1972, staffs at the six prospective voucher schools voted on participation in the demonstration. Principals at all six schools exerted strong influence in favor of participation (one held repeated votes until the decision was finally favorable) and all six schools eventually decided to join. The prospects for additional funds for supplies, equipment, and in-service training, as well as for greater autonomy in curriculum and budget decisions, seemed to be the major attractions of the demonstration for teachers. During the first year, the district decided to go ahead with plans for expansion of the demonstration, and teachers at the remaining district schools were given the opportunity to vote on participation. Once again, nearly all the nonvoucher principals urged their staffs to join the demonstration. In a few communities, parents lobbied actively either for or against participation, but in most cases the decision was made by the school staff, with little if any parent involvement.

When all the votes had been taken, seven additional schools had decided to become voucher schools for the 1973-74 school year.¹ (One more school joined the demonstration in 1974-75, bringing the total of voucher schools to fourteen).

The process of mini-school formation was essentially the same for the initial voucher schools and those that joined the demonstration later, though planning during the first year was considerably more rushed. (Within six weeks of contract approval, staffs of the first six schools had decided on their programs and teacher assignments and had distributed program descriptions to parents, and parents had made their selections for the following year.) Decisions about exactly how many and which programs to offer in each building were left to the discretion of individual schools, with little participation by other district administrators or by parents.² The teacher assignment process was generally informal. Teachers tended to form mini-schools with their friends or with other teachers who shared their educational philosophy. Initial teacher placements into mini-schools were tentative, however, subject to reassignment based on actual student enrollment. Teachers were not required to prepare detailed program proposals; rather, they decided on an approach, chose a mini-school name, wrote a short description for parents, and planned their programs as they went along.

There were 22 mini-schools during the first year of the demonstration, 45 in the second year and 51 in the third year, covering a broad spectrum of program themes. In most buildings, at least one mini-school elected to continue offering an essentially traditional educational program, enhanced by extra money to buy materials and hire aides. Teachers in such programs would still be affected by

¹Most frequently cited by expansion school teachers as "the main reason for your school's decision to join the voucher demonstration" were: increased funds (96 percent), flexibility of programming (78 percent), opportunity for innovation (76 percent), and more influence of teachers over the budget (74 percent)--from Rand Teacher Questionnaire, May 1973.

²In a few cases, parents were asked to indicate preferences from a list of potential mini-school options, and teachers then developed the most popular ones.

many of the changes of the demonstration--the mini-school organization per se, new budgeting procedures, uncertainty about enrollment--but they would not be attempting to change their classroom practices to any significant degree. A number of mini-schools selected content-oriented themes, such as the Fine Arts, Math-Science, and Multicultural mini-schools. In most of these programs, the educational changes were essentially add-ons: children would spend additional time studying math and science or art and music, or would learn about the lives and customs of other cultures in their social studies lessons, but the basic mode of teaching for most of the school day would remain unchanged. Other Alum Rock mini-schools chose to attempt more fundamental changes in classroom structure and method by introducing such comprehensive innovations as a nongraded continuous progress organization or open classrooms.

Thus, in Alum Rock, educational alternatives emerged as part of a plan to test a quasi-marketplace system for the delivery of educational services.¹ The district's reasons for joining the demonstration, in addition to the substantial financial incentives, apparently related more to the organizational aspects of the plan--the prospect for advancing administrative decentralization--than to local demand for greater educational diversity. As we shall see in the following chapters, therefore, the nature of the voucher model and the district's

¹ A voucher system would not necessarily require that schools offer clearly distinguishable educational programs. While such diversity *might* emerge in response to consumer demand as a result of an educational marketplace, it would not necessarily have to. It is not clear, for example, that most of the affluent parents who choose to send their children to private schools do so because such schools offer a fundamentally different type of education than the public schools. Though this is sometimes the case, the attraction of many private schools is not in their unusual *approach* to education, but rather in the *perceived quality* of their programs, which may nevertheless resemble public school programs in basic respects. The features that distinguish such private schools are more likely to relate to resources--class size, staff qualifications, or quality of facilities--or to characteristics of the student body.

In Alum Rock, the decision to create mini-schools that would offer distinct programs at the inception of the demonstration--rather than to leave the emergence of diversity to the operation of the market--

own agenda led district management to focus more on managerial innovations than on educational changes in the classroom.

Cincinnati

The liberal school board that brought Superintendent Donald Waldrup to Cincinnati in the summer of 1972 was interested in educational alternatives to help revitalize the city's school system, keep middle-class families from fleeing to the suburbs or private schools, and make inroads into the problem of racial isolation.¹ In early 1973, the board voted to seek a special tax levy to support a number of improvements in the schools, including alternatives.² During the levy campaign, whose theme was "The Return to Excellence in Education for Every Student," alternatives were promoted primarily on their educational merits, without making their potential role in desegregation explicit. A campaign brochure stated that levy funds would be used "to offer many alternative educational courses and programs to meet individualized needs. These can be special schools, such as a school without walls, career education, college preparatory schools, a special school for the artistically gifted, a school for advanced science and technology, a school such as individually guided education or open classrooms."

came about because the original voucher schools had similar programs and reputations, so there would not have been much basis for parents to choose among them. Also, as noted earlier, parents involved in planning the demonstration were committed to the neighborhood school concept; mini-schools would still provide for some element of choice within that context.

¹The other finalist for the superintendency had been Dr. Mario Fantini, a prominent figure in the educational alternatives movement, who had already begun to speak and write about his concept of "public schools of choice."

²This account is based in part on *Alternative Programs in Cincinnati Public Schools*, 1977, a report by the School Foundation of Greater Cincinnati.

The levy campaign went on when the board and the community were quarreling over desegregation; the board had recently resolved to make "quality integrated education" its "highest goal." Despite support for both the proposed alternative schools and the levy from both of Cincinnati's daily newspapers and numerous prominent community organizations, the levy lost badly. The board subsequently included funds for a greatly reduced alternatives program in its General Fund Budget for the 1973-74 school year.

The superintendent's attention turned to finding programs that could be started inexpensively. Of the first three alternative programs funded for the 1973-74 school year, therefore, two built on programs already in existence, one within the public system and one outside it. The IPSIP (Individual Progress and Social Impact Program), emphasizing interracial and intercultural experiences for young children, had been funded as a preschool model with federal Title III monies since 1970. The program had garnered both national recognition and local community support, so the board voted to continue it with local funds at the same site for kindergarten and first graders (it has subsequently been expanded to grade three, with two other sites added). The other program, the City-Wide Learning Community, was formed when the director of a private, secondary school-without-walls, who was a former teacher in the district, successfully petitioned for the school to become part of the district as an alternative program.

The third initial alternative was started from scratch and has become perhaps the most popular and famous of Cincinnati's alternative schools--the School for the Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA). Superintendent Waldrip believed that such a program would appeal to Cincinnati's self-image as a cultural center and asked the district's vocal music supervisor to draw up a proposal. A particularly dynamic area director was assigned to oversee start-up and staff selection. The program opened in the fall of 1973 with 200 fourth through seventh graders, accepted on the basis of auditions, and was designed to expand one grade level each year until it spanned grades four through

twelve. This strategy of "growing alternatives" one year at a time has since been employed in a number of other Cincinnati programs.

When the new, more conservative school board took office in January 1974, it asserted its commitment to *voluntary* desegregation and instructed the superintendent to develop a list of possible additional alternative schools. These new alternatives, like the three existing ones, would draw students from the entire city, with enrollment regulated to achieve racial balance. The district's student population was very nearly 50 percent black and 50 percent white; ratios of up to 70:30 either way would be allowed in the alternatives.

The administration developed three new alternatives to be implemented in 1974-75. The first was the German-English Bilingual Program. For the previous seven years, four district schools had participated in an experimental Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools (FLES) Program, funded first by the University of Cincinnati and later by the district. The superintendent asked one of the university-based teachers in this program, which was being phased out, to develop a proposal for an elementary alternative based on German language instruction. The board approved the program for implementation at two sites and the woman who wrote the proposal was hired to develop the curriculum and serve as program coordinator.

It was also decided to turn three elementary schools into "magnet" schools, offering an Individually Guided Education (IGE)¹ Program. Magnet schools, in Cincinnati parlance, were to be neighborhood schools that would also encourage applications from students outside their attendance areas to promote racial balance.² (The other alternatives had no attendance areas.) Unlike other Cincinnati alternatives,

¹IGE is a model for individualizing instruction that was developed by the Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning.

²Cincinnati's other alternatives also fit the definition of "magnet" schools that is more commonly used, namely, schools with special features designed to attract students of different racial backgrounds.

which have been able to recruit volunteer teachers, existing school staffs have generally implemented magnet programs. One of these three original magnet schools had already tried out the IGE program for several years with special state funding.

The superintendent also wanted a program that could help integrate a number of the district's junior high schools. A social studies curriculum coordinator at the Education Center devised the Junior High College Readiness Program, based on a simple structural change in the junior high curriculum: students would have one teacher for a double math-science period each day and another for a double English-social studies period, instead of having four separate classes for these subjects. The program was to be restricted to students of at least average ability or academic achievement, with a special eye toward those who had failed the entrance exam to the prestigious college-preparatory Walnut Hills School after sixth grade and would be allowed to try again after ninth grade. At the urging of the superintendent and his assistants, principals of three junior highs, two of which had predominantly white and the other predominantly black enrollments, agreed to adopt the program at their schools. Part of their incentive for doing so was a promise of two extra teachers per school (above what any additional enrollment in the program would have entitled them to).

After the filing of the *Bronson* suit by the NAACP in May 1974 (see Chapter II), the Cincinnati Board of Education decided to expand the alternatives system for the 1975-76 school year. The district's Department of Research and Development conducted a city-wide survey of 3,600 families to gauge overall support for alternatives as well as preferences for proposed new programs. Response rates were low (23 percent among parents of elementary students; 28 percent for secondary), but the results indicated "that one third of the parents' responses were strongly in favor of alternative schools and another third interested but undecided" (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1976a, p. 1). Community hearings were also held to provide information about alternatives to the public and to receive feedback.

In February 1975, eight new programs were approved by the board for implementation the following fall. Only three of these were among the sixteen potential options that had been included in the survey: a Montessori School, a Fundamental Academy, and a secondary Math-Science Academy. Montessori had not ranked high overall in the survey, but had drawn substantial interest in the white middle-class neighborhoods of the district's East area. The founder of the American Montessori Society, working under a foundation grant at a local university to extend the American Montessori curriculum into the elementary grades, planned the program and agreed to serve as its coordinator.

The other new alternative programs were French and Spanish Elementary Bilingual (at two sites each); a pair of Reading Intervention Centers for students needing remedial work in reading¹; an ungraded Multi-Age Magnet School; and an Elementary College Preparatory Program at three schools. This last alternative provides an enriched academic program for average and above average students, and therefore is essentially an academic track.

The initiation of alternatives in Cincinnati has thus been characterized by a centralized, top-down style of decisionmaking. As just described, most ideas for alternatives and decisions about program placement have originated from the central office, with the school board playing an active role in related deliberations. For the most part, local school administrators, staffs, and communities have not had much voice in choosing the programs to be offered at their schools.² The central office wanted to oversee the role that

¹These centers are no longer classified as alternatives.

²There have been several recent exceptions to this pattern, which may indicate that the pattern itself is changing. Several individual schools have requested particular alternatives at their buildings and have won district approval. Also, at a junior high school that has been slated to close as a neighborhood school and to reopen as an alternative in the fall of 1978, a large group of black and white parents was at work this past year writing proposals for possible alternatives to be housed in that building.

various programs and sites would play in desegregation, and also sought to establish a large number of alternatives quickly. Therefore, it may have viewed individual schools' participation in initiation decisions as too cumbersome.

Administratively, the district's top officials have given high priority to alternatives. The superintendent and his two assistants have personally passed on program ideas and locations. Once each new program is approved, they turn it over to a high-level administrator (usually an area director) who supervises start-up. Curriculum specialists from the central office are assigned to supervise planning and implementation. In a number of cases where curriculum development represented a special challenge, such as the bilingual and Montessori programs, coordinators have been recruited from local universities or elsewhere outside the system. There was no separate administrative office for alternative schools in Cincinnati until 1976, when one was created primarily to handle public information and to process admissions applications.

Cincinnati has supported its alternatives out of its general operating budget, with about two-thirds of the transportation costs being reimbursed by the state.¹ Excess costs vary greatly from program to program, depending primarily on student-teacher ratio and the use of special staff. The district's figures for 1975-76, when approximately 5,350 students were enrolled in alternatives, show total excess instructional costs (excluding transportation) for

¹To date, the district has been unsuccessful in its attempts to secure outside funds to support its alternatives efforts. In the fall of 1973, it applied for an Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) grant to help create alternative schools for desegregation purposes in one of the city's high school districts. The superintendent had received verbal assurance from federal officials that the district's voluntary desegregation efforts were sufficient to warrant the application. However, after the new school board took office in January, the federal grant was denied because of alleged discriminatory policies on the part of the board. Several months later, the board filed suit in Federal District Court to challenge "the right of the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare to withhold emergency school aid for the purpose of coercing the Cincinnati Board of Education to abandon its policy of providing a quality integrated

alternatives of approximately \$875,000, or \$164 per student (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1976b, pp. 4-9).¹ The range of per pupil excess costs went from a low of \$9 in one IPSIP program to a high of \$844 in one Junior High College Readiness Program.

In sum, alternatives in Cincinnati have been established largely to help advance the local goals of promoting voluntary desegregation and retaining middle-class students in the public schools. The substantial local resources and administrative attention that have been devoted to the rapid growth of the alternatives system attest to the school board's commitment to avoiding a court-ordered mandatory desegregation plan. The goals and context for alternatives in Cincinnati led to a top-down pattern of program initiation; in the next two chapters we will see how this pattern affected the course of implementation.

Eugene

Many people in Eugene seem to believe that the idea of educational alternatives was brought to the district by Superintendent Thomas Payzant, who arrived in Eugene for the 1973-74 school year. As noted in the last chapter, however, when the Eugene School Board sought

education to the children of Cincinnati through the maintenance of neighborhood schools, and for the purpose of coercing the Board to overturn and restructure the system of public education now in operation in Cincinnati." Cincinnati Board of Education v. HEW, U.S. Court of Appeals (6th Circuit), No. 75-1918 (1976). The District Court found for HEW but ordered the Department to set aside \$1.2 million for the ESAA grant to Cincinnati, pending the outcome of an appeal. In March 1976, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals sent the case back to the District Court to determine the issue of discrimination on the basis of evidence that will be considered in the *Bronson* case, which is still pending.

The District was instrumental in getting Ohio's Senator John Glenn to introduce the School Integration Innovation Act (passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1976, P.L. 94-482), which specifically authorizes ESAA grants for the implementation of magnet schools.

¹This total does not include about \$112,000 in one-time facilities-related costs.

guidance from the public in selecting a new superintendent, they had heard expressions of dissatisfaction with the schools and considerable community interest in open and humanistic alternatives for Eugene. They therefore deliberately sought a superintendent who had experience with and commitment to such ideas and gave him a mandate to begin working toward the development of new educational options. Superintendent Payzant has commented that he found such receptivity to alternatives in Eugene that, contrary to his expectations, his role became primarily that of a supporter rather than an advocate of alternatives.¹ One factor that may have contributed to Eugene's acceptance of alternatives was a liberal open enrollment policy, which was already in effect when Payzant was hired. This policy allows students to transfer to any school in the district in which space is available.²

Soon after school opened in September 1973, the new superintendent officially launched the district's alternatives effort by inviting all district staff to participate in an initial evening work session to discuss such general questions as: What do we mean by alternative schools? Should we or should we not develop alternative programs in the district? Who should be involved and how should the planning process be structured?"³ The attendance of 300 people at this meeting suggests widespread staff interest in the subject of alternatives. In his memo to all district staff reporting on the meeting, the superintendent summarized Eugene's emerging definition of alternatives as follows:

¹His expectations had been partially conditioned by his experiences in his previous district where, as he describes it, alternatives were a "top-down policy thrust" and his job was to "get out and sell it to the community."

²Though district records do not permit an exact tally of these transfers, district officials estimate that between 10 and 15 percent of the district's students avail themselves of the option of attending a school outside their neighborhood.

³Superintendent's Memo, Eugene Public Schools, September 28, 1973.

An alternative school is a school designed to offer students and parents educational options that are not available in the existing schools in the district. For a school to be a true alternative school, not only must its curriculum be substantively different, but also the total organization of the school must depart from that of our other schools. This means that an alternative school is a totally different approach to education, not just a class or classes which are part of the regular school day. Different staffing patterns, new methods of decision making, greater student and parent involvement, variation in curriculum and a clearly defined student population and admissions procedure are the kinds of things that typify an alternative school.¹

A separate large work session was held soon afterward for parents and interested members of the community, designed for them to develop their ideas about alternatives, "free from too much direction from staff members."² Subsequently, groups of staff and parents began to coalesce to work on specific proposals. An alternative school steering committee, composed of district staff not working directly on any individual proposal, was appointed to coordinate the work of the various proposal groups. By late January 1974, an alternatives "fair" was held to present and discuss nine alternative school proposals.

Committees representing the various proposals also held a series of public discussions throughout the district, having been given the task of "seeking public support for their proposals, finding others willing to participate in future shaping of these ideas, and documenting the degree of public interest they have been able to generate."³ The first week in March was set as the deadline for submission of final proposals. These were reviewed by the superintendent and alternative school steering committee, who in turn made recommendations to the school board about which programs should be implemented.

¹

Superintendent's Memo, Eugene Public Schools, October 30, 1973.

²

Superintendent's Memo to Alternative School Work Session Participants, October 30, 1973.

³

Superintendent's Memo, Eugene Public Schools, March 5, 1974.

The criteria on which proposals were judged included "demonstrated public interest," "educational substance," and "practical considerations such as possible location, transportation problems, staffing, and other matters attendant to actual implementation."¹ Superintendent Payzant and several steering committee members recall approaching these proposal reviews in 1974 with a sense that the political viability of alternatives in the district would hinge on the success of the first ones tried out. They rejected a popular proposal for a Senior High Outdoor Life Involvement Program, partly because it had failed to win the endorsement of local mountain safety groups. Of eight final proposals submitted, six were recommended to the board for implementation in the fall of 1974.

Of these six, four had their roots in programs that had already operated in the district in one form or another. Action Community Service High School grew out of a project in a high school social studies department where students received course credit for work in the community. The Arts-Oriented Magnet School, an elementary program whose curriculum would be built around the fine arts, was developed by the staff of a former federally funded program who had continued to function as an arts curriculum cadre for the district. Silver Lea Corridor School and Ida Patterson Primary School were open structure programs already operating as school-within-school arrangements with the support of their principals. By becoming "designated alternatives" they acquired more prominence and legitimacy in the district. A new open structure elementary program, the Eastside Alternative School, had the backing of a group of parents, several of them associated with the university, who had been involved for the previous few years in a sometimes acrimonious struggle to introduce changes in their neighborhood school. They sought extensive community involvement in school governance. The sixth proposal accepted was for an Environmental Outdoor School for the upper elementary grades.

¹Superintendent's Memo, Eugene Public Schools, March 5, 1974.

Since 1974, three additional programs have been proposed and approved. The initiation process has been similar to that for the original programs, with some refinements. The district's special projects assistant has provided technical support to the proposal-writers and the district has underwritten the cost of a preliminary survey of interest among parents and students for each proposal. An ad hoc committee, consisting of administration, school staff, and parent and student representatives, was selected to review each proposal. The three additional programs are Evergreen, an ungraded continuous progress elementary school-within-a-school; the Traditional Alternative School, a "back-to-basics" elementary program departing from the "liberal" thrust of the rest of Eugene's alternatives, and the only program whose proposal was written exclusively by parents; and Horizons, an alternative high school based on student involvement in curriculum planning and school governance.¹

From the outset, Superintendent Payzant was sensitive to the need to neutralize potential opposition from people who feared that alternatives might cost too much. He therefore set forth the following policy on expenditures for alternatives, which has remained in effect: "The basic premise required in the development of all proposals is that the costs for staffing, supplies, materials, facilities, etc., not exceed those in the regular schools. If alternative proposals are accepted by the board for implementation, resources will follow students from their regular school program to the alternative school of their choice."² The district does not provide free transportation to alternative schools, which means it is easier for students who live near an alternative school to attend it.

¹Horizons was designed by "The Planning Course," a board-authorized program in which twenty secondary students received half-time academic credit for a year while they conducted a needs assessment among their peers and developed a proposal for the district's second high school alternative.

²Superintendent's Memo, Eugene Public Schools, March 5, 1974.

Early in 1974, before the alternative programs began, Superintendent Payzant created the new position of special projects assistant in the Department of Research, Development and Evaluation. The job description outlined responsibilities for implementing "special projects" in the district, which at that time meant primarily alternative schools. While the job was originally slated to be an administrative position, the person the superintendent decided to hire did not have administrative certification, so the job was turned into a classified position at a lower salary. The first special projects assistant had not previously worked for the district but did have experience in alternative education. She held the position for two years, and devoted most of her time to the alternative schools, acting as a liaison between them and the central administration. While her official rank on the organization chart was not very high, she had direct access to the superintendent, for whom alternatives were a high priority. Though this special position facilitated her advocacy of the alternatives, it also seems to have generated some bureaucratic jealousies.

In summary, the initiation of alternatives in Eugene was a district response to the educational concerns of some of its parents, students, and staff. In adopting a policy of offering alternatives, the school board legitimized the creation of diversity in the district, as long as no more was spent on the alternatives than on existing programs. The system for proposals and administrative review provided a way for the alternatives system to grow in response to changing demand, but to date it has remained quite small: nine programs, with approximately forty staff members and fewer than a thousand students. This suggests that the dissatisfaction with Eugene's regular schools that gave rise to educational options was not widespread. It represented a vocal and articulate minority of the public, which has been most directly served by the district's alternatives policy.

Minneapolis

Educational alternatives began officially in Minneapolis with the inception in 1971 of Southeast Alternatives (SEA), a five-year project funded by the United States Office of Education. Minneapolis received a grant of \$3.6 million for the first two school years (and a second grant of approximately \$3 million for the last three years) to attempt to bring about "comprehensive change" by creating educational choices in a small subregion of the district that enrolled about 2,500 students. Toward the end of SEA's second year, the Minneapolis School Board decided to move toward offering educational choices at grades K-6 throughout the city. This section examines the beginnings of the SEA pilot alternatives project and then considers the initiation of the more far-reaching alternatives program several years later.

In late 1970, the new Experimental Schools Program in the U.S. Office of Education announced its intention of supporting a limited number of large-scale experiments aimed at comprehensive educational change. Dr. Robert Binswanger, the director of the Experimental Schools Program, telephoned Minneapolis Superintendent John Davis personally to alert him to the letter announcing the grant competition. Minneapolis was indeed interested in the possibility of running such a project in the Southeast section of the district, the area adjacent to the University of Minnesota. Based on its letter of intent, the district qualified for a 60-day planning grant and Dr. Jim Kent, director of Southeast's Marshall-University High School,¹ was placed in charge of writing the proposal. Kent had recently served two years as Superintendent Davis's administrative assistant, and had completed his doctorate at Harvard under Binswanger.

Significantly, even before the possibility of receiving outside funds in support of alternatives became known, a variety of educational changes had already been under way in Southeast. Two adjacent

¹Marshall-University High School, which covers grades 7 through 12, had been formed several years earlier through the merger of a district high school with the University's experimental high school.

neighborhood schools were being paired for desegregation purposes, and, with parental support, had begun to experiment with an ungraded, continuous progress curriculum. A combined group of parents from the area's other two elementary schools, Southeast Parents for Open Classrooms, had been lobbying their principals and the associate superintendent and had received tentative commitments to initiate the district's first open classrooms. So educational diversity was already emerging in Southeast in response to parent and staff demand, and the district had shown a willingness to commit its own resources to such changes. Marshall-University High, Southeast's junior-senior high school, had also been involved in a number of innovative programs.

The model of change proposed to USOE by Minneapolis called for providing educational choices, more community participation in the educational process, and decentralized administration. Three of the elementary schools in Southeast would offer three distinct educational programs. All would impart the "basic skills" but their structure and methods would differ. There would be a Contemporary School, representing the traditional self-contained classroom approach to elementary instruction; a Continuous Progress School, using an ungraded, team teaching approach in which students move through a prescribed curriculum at their own pace; and an Open School, featuring student-directed learning in an environment of interest centers where teachers serve as facilitators. The fourth elementary school would become a K-12 Free School for those who favored an even greater departure from conventional practice. A variety of new programs and instructional modes would be initiated within the framework of the junior-senior high school.

Community residents and local staff were heavily involved in writing the SEA proposal. Even before the planning monies were assured, Kent had been gathering ideas in a series of small neighborhood meetings in Southeast. Once the planning started officially, three parents were hired to serve as community liaisons. Weekly open meetings were held for all interested staff, parents, and students. Smaller groups began to coalesce to work on specific

pieces of the proposal. Central district management was largely uninvolved in drafting the proposal, except for providing technical support. The rationale behind this planning strategy is summed up in the project's final report: "...even if not funded, a plan for change that came from people in the schools would fuel the local process of change, in any event" (Morley, 1976, p. 19). The governance section of the proposal called for extensive community participation, with a new parent-staff-community council to oversee the project.

The Southeast Alternatives proposal was submitted in mid-April, and on May 15, Minneapolis received word that the project would be funded. During the next three weeks, the district notified all Southeast families of their educational options for the following year so they could select schools for their children. On June 7, the superintendent presented the Minneapolis School Board with the contract with the federal government and obtained unanimous approval.

The SEA project had advantages in gaining the district's acceptance, because it brought with it a major grant of outside funds. As Superintendent Davis has pointed out, opposition to an innovation is more likely to develop if the resources must be committed at the expense of others' projects, which was not the case with SEA (Davis and Hols, 1977). Davis also regards the fact that SEA's controversial new approaches were to be limited to one small section of the city, where parents and staff were generally supportive, as a key to explaining why other people in the district did not feel directly threatened and so did not oppose it. Though Davis, his cabinet, and the federal sponsors saw SEA as a model with potential for extension throughout the system, this idea was not widely advertised at first. "So far as most of the system was aware, in short, SEA was not an entering wedge for comprehensive change.. in Minneapolis, at least to start, the leadership view was that comprehensive change comes best when talked about least" (Morley, 1976, p. 57).

Within Southeast, the opportunity to participate in a sweeping, well-financed innovative project brought considerable excitement and enthusiasm. There was a place within the project for those eager to

undertake ambitious changes in educational methods and those content with enriching what they considered a basically sound traditional approach to education. Staff were given the choice of staying in their present schools, transferring to a more compatible program, or leaving the project entirely. Thus everyone who was participating was doing so voluntarily, and there would also be extensive opportunities for staff development.

Once the federal government gave its approval, each SEA school could proceed with its own planning. The federal money allowed teachers to be paid for lengthy planning workshops that first summer. The format for these workshops varied from school to school, as the needs of the staffs and programs varied, and teachers had a significant voice in deciding how they should be run. (The staff development component of SEA will be considered at greater length in Chapter IV.)

The administrative organization for Southeast was not clearly defined in the proposal. Jim Kent was appointed project director and was invited to rejoin the superintendent's cabinet (on which he had previously served as assistant to the superintendent). This would give the project direct access to the district's top policy-makers. Kent felt strongly that SEA should follow a decentralized administrative model, as was being tried in the district's two pilot pyramids, with Southeast building principals reporting directly to him rather than to their assigned associate superintendents. After the first six months of the project, Kent prevailed on Superintendent Davis to adopt this structure. Southeast would become a quasi-autonomous administrative unit. Its principals would be responsible to the Southeast director; project resources would go in a lump sum to the director and then be allocated among the five Southeast schools.

Early in 1972, when SEA was in the throes of its hectic first year, school board member Richard Allen, a self-described "moderate progressive," introduced a proposal before the board calling for alternatives to be extended to other areas of the district. As he recalled it in a personal conversation, his resolution was met with

"an overwhelming torrent of abuse," including threatening telephone calls to his home. The two newest and most conservative members of the board were vehemently opposed to his proposal, believing that options implied permissiveness in education. The idea of expanding alternatives beyond SEA was temporarily laid to rest.

In May 1972, Minneapolis was placed under federal court order to desegregate its schools. The court approved, with minor revisions, a desegregation/integration plan the board had voluntarily adopted the previous month, calling for pairing or clustering of schools to create large, racially balanced attendance areas. Superintendent Davis and his top aides, who had supported the concept of expanding alternatives on strictly educational grounds, also saw alternatives as a way to make the court-ordered desegregation more palatable to the community by injecting an element of educational choice into the plan. If students within a cluster of schools could select one of several different programs, the bus ride would hopefully be seen as serving an educational objective.

Over the next year, Superintendent Davis made a point of periodically inviting Jim Kent, the SEA project director, to participate in his weekly breakfast meetings with the school board. Kent discussed with the members the progress of alternatives in Southeast and answered questions. This forum allowed board members to voice their concerns and doubts about alternatives among themselves, free from public exposure.¹ Gradually, even the two "opposition" board members came to see educational options as a strategy for making desegregation more effective educationally and more acceptable politically. In addition to this behind-the-scenes lobbying of the board, the superintendent also moved to create broader community and staff support for alternatives. Early in the 1972-73 school year, anticipating board action on alternatives, he established an Alternatives Advisory

¹The Minnesota legislature passed the Minnesota Open Meeting Law in 1971, requiring elected public bodies to hold all their meetings in public. Since 1975, when this so-called "sunshine law" was upheld in a test court case, the strategy of private board briefings has not been used in Minneapolis.

Task Force, composed of administrators, staff, and parents, to make recommendations on the creation of educational choices in the other parts of the district.

In March 1973, board member Allen introduced a new resolution calling for the administration to "commence feasibility studies and planning necessary to implement a citywide program for educational choices at grades K through 6, with a goal of full implementation by September, 1976." The resolution also stated that: "While the concept of the Southeast Alternatives shall serve as a model, the precise form of the program shall be developed during the planning period. Any plan must be consistent with desegregation/integration programs adopted by the Minneapolis Board of Education."¹ This time, after brief discussion, including a call by one board member for consideration of local parents' preferences in deciding the options for each area, the motion was passed unanimously. The administration was to provide interim progress reports to the board at six-month intervals.

At the time the city-wide alternatives policy was adopted, the district had recently been divided into North, West, and East decentralized areas under area superintendents. Each area was charged with developing its own approach to alternatives, to be coordinated with its desegregation efforts. The start-up costs of planning, curriculum development, and staff training were to be allocated out of area superintendents' budgets, based on assessments of individual school needs.

Planning for alternatives was organized by administrative areas and, within areas, by groups of schools whose attendance areas had been clustered under the desegregation plan. In some communities, parent interest in alternative programs provided the initial thrust; in others, expression of interest began with a school staff or part of a school staff. Surveys were conducted among the families served by various school clusters to determine how much support existed for

¹Minutes of Minneapolis Board of Education meeting, March 13, 1973.

different types of options. Groups of administrators and teachers, often with the assistance of parents, worked together to design the programs.

There was no mandate to replicate the SEA choices in other parts of the city, but the use of SEA as a model did provide for some uniformity in programs city-wide. There was, for example, an informal consensus that elementary alternatives would differ in structure and style, rather than in content. The alternative programs that have been created in other parts of the city have in fact tended to parallel the three basic SEA models: contemporary, continuous progress, and open. The district has encouraged schools to adapt these basic approaches to their own needs. For example, a number of schools elected to offer programs labeled "modified open" to signal a somewhat greater degree of teacher-imposed structure than would be found in Southeast's prototype open program. In all, ten schools adopted the continuous progress model; six an open or modified open program; and seven schools decided to develop either two or all three programs in the same building. The remaining thirty-six elementary schools offer a contemporary program.¹

¹The practice of labeling all elementary schools that are neither continuous progress, open, nor modified open, as "contemporary" is somewhat misleading. Some of these contemporary schools are part of clusters offering the other options as well, have therefore been directly involved in the offering of choices, and can thus be considered genuine alternatives. But many schools located in the district's so-called "outer-ring," which have not been included in the desegregation plan, are also labeled contemporary, even though they are not clustered with the other types of programs and so have not been affected very much by the alternatives effort (their students may voluntarily transfer to open or continuous progress programs within their administrative area, but relatively few do so). It seems less appropriate to consider these schools as alternatives. We estimate that only 9 contemporary schools belong in the first category and 26 in the second (for further explanation of this classification, see Rasmussen (1978), Vol. III in this series).

Minneapolis originated alternatives on a small scale in a deliberate attempt to bring about comprehensive educational change. Parents and staff in this area had already shown interest in options other than the traditional elementary school, and the receipt of a large federal grant made it possible to thoroughly develop and implement several innovative models. The district used local funds to expand alternatives to other parts of the district to advance the main local goals: educational improvement and desegregation. In terms of the number of students it set out to serve (all elementary students in the district) and the types of programs it attempted to create, Minneapolis's alternatives program qualifies as one of the most ambitious in the country.

Summary

This chapter has described the initiation phase of four quite different systems of educational alternatives. These four systems can be compared on several dimensions that ultimately had important implications for the course of implementation in each district: the reasons for initiating alternatives, the resources made available to support implementation, the methods employed to establish new programs, and the types of educational changes attempted.

Reasons for Initiation

First, it is apparent that these four districts had different reasons for introducing educational options. Eugene and Minneapolis's Southeast area faced significant consumer demand for new types of educational choices. In both cities, parents from university neighborhoods led in support of humanistic, student-centered approaches to learning. These parents were well informed about current educational ideas and were able to make their influence felt. In both cases, the school systems responded. Many of these parents also wanted a more direct voice in running the schools, so both cities adopted changes in governance to accommodate this desire, as part of the alternatives system.

In Alum Rock and Cincinnati, the situation was different. Alternatives were initiated not in response to community pressure for different types of educational programs, but rather as a means of achieving other district goals. Alum Rock's participation in the federally sponsored voucher demonstration came about largely because of the efforts of its superintendent, who saw it as aiding his plans for administrative decentralization and as an opportunity to improve the district's financial situation. The notion of educational choice, as embodied in the voucher plan, was an idea imported into the district with federal funding, not one that grew out of local demands. Mini-schools were introduced as an attempt to inject some diversity into the system, because "competition" among six similar public schools did not promise to be an interesting test of voucher theory. There is no evidence that Alum Rock parents had been anxious for new kinds of educational programs. From the start, much of the emphasis in the Alum Rock demonstration was on the politics and mechanics surrounding a new system of allocating resources among schools--which is, of course, what a voucher system was supposed to be all about--rather than on the development of distinct educational alternatives.

One of the major goals of Cincinnati's alternatives has been to solve the district's problem of racial imbalance through voluntary student transfers. The strategy has been to design programs that would be appealing enough to attract both black and white students away from their neighborhood schools. In Minneapolis, the district-wide alternatives program was also related to desegregation goals but was adopted within the context of a mandatory desegregation order. The district's alternatives policy was intended to facilitate the desegregation plan *and* to advance educational reform throughout the district.

Resources Made Available for Alternatives

Two of these four districts, Alum Rock and Minneapolis, received multimillion-dollar federal grants to initiate their systems of alternatives, while the other two districts, Cincinnati and Eugene, relied

exclusively on local resources. Alum Rock did not allocate any local funds beyond the normal per pupil expenditures to the voucher project. Minneapolis used its federal monies to develop and test alternatives in one small section of the district, and then supported the creation of alternatives elsewhere in the district out of local resources. Cincinnati has allocated substantial amounts of local funds to its alternative schools because they are viewed as the district's best hope of avoiding a mandatory desegregation order. In Eugene, where alternatives served no goal other than responding to consumers who were dissatisfied with the district's regular schools, the superintendent felt they would be tolerated by the larger community only so long as no extra resources were committed to them, which placed serious restrictions on program development.

Methods Used To Establish Programs

The methods for establishing alternative programs in these four systems led to different roles for central district management, depending upon the goals of alternatives and the local institutional context. In Alum Rock, once the decision to offer mini-schools had been made for the demonstration as a whole, decisions about what programs to offer were left to principals and teachers at voucher schools. In keeping with the voucher notion of an education marketplace, this laissez-faire system of program formation included no process for central review or approval of program offerings. The acceptability or viability of programs was to be determined by consumer demand.

In Eugene, proposals for alternatives are generated by groups of staff and/or parents but must receive the approval of the district administration and school board before being carried out. This initiation strategy serves to legitimize local innovation while at the same time retaining central control of the process. The district has provided some technical support to groups who express interest in submitting proposals, but has generally assumed a responsive posture toward the creation of new alternatives, and has not actively encouraged the growth of the alternatives system.

In Minneapolis, where, as in Eugene, consumer demand provided the original impetus for alternatives, the strategy of using alternatives to further another district goal--desegregation--required a more active role by the district. The decision to offer alternatives district-wide was centrally mandated, and inducements were offered to school staffs in the form of additional in-service monies and extra staff allocations. The actual design and planning of programs to be offered, however, was left to the discretion of local staffs and communities.

By contract, in Cincinnati, alternative programs have been designed--and location decisions made--by the central administration. Though Cincinnati, like Minneapolis, has used alternatives to advance desegregation, its particular desegregation context has dictated this more centralized strategy for establishing alternatives. Minneapolis incorporated alternatives into a court-ordered desegregation plan that required the creation of racially balanced school clusters. The district was then able to leave decisions about what programs to offer to the local initiative of each cluster. In Cincinnati, however, there is no court order to desegregate, and the district has not voluntarily paired or clustered schools to achieve racial balance. Under these circumstances, district administrators are in a better position than individual schools to anticipate which programs at which sites would be most likely to attract racially balanced enrollments.

Types of Changes Attempted

The final dimension for comparing these four systems is the type of educational change attempted in their alternative programs. The specific alternatives a district chooses to offer partly determine the kinds of problems that will have to be solved during implementation. Different kinds of programs, for example, create different requirements for specialized resource staff, training of regular staff, and curriculum development.

In Chapter I we made the distinction between alternatives that offer a special instructional method and those that offer special content or curriculum. Both method-oriented and content-oriented programs may vary considerably in their ambitiousness, but in our experience, the former seem generally to require more behavioral change on the part of regular classroom teachers and, consequently, are more difficult to implement. This is partly because method-oriented programs tend to affect all aspects of the school program, whereas content-oriented programs are often modular; that is, they affect teaching in a particular subject area, but do not require changes in the rest of the educational program.

Applying these categories to our four sample districts, we see that method-oriented programs have dominated in Minneapolis and Eugene, while Cincinnati and Alum Rock have developed some of both types of programs.

Minneapolis's open, modified open, and continuous progress models all represent substantial departures from traditional classroom practice, with open programs requiring the greatest change in the teacher's role, followed by modified open and continuous progress.¹ Most of Eugene's alternatives, with the notable exception of its Traditional Alternative School, set out to create a more open classroom structure and provide increased opportunities for self-directed learning by students. Two programs, Magnet Arts and the Environmental School, offer special curricular emphases along with a more open classroom style. Thus Eugene's programs, like the continuous progress and open programs in Minneapolis, attempt basic changes in the overall approach to teaching.

As described earlier, the program themes selected by voucher teachers in Alum Rock reflected a broad range of goals. Some were to be essentially traditional programs (Basic Skills, Three R's Plus),

¹Minneapolis's contemporary model, based on the traditional self-contained classroom arrangement, is also considered an alternative program but does not, for the most part, require teachers to change their behavior.

others were to emphasize specific content areas (Fine Arts, Math-Science), and still others were to provide more pervasive innovations like ungraded or open classrooms (Continuous Progress, School 2000). Only the last set of programs, which were a minority of all Alum Rock mini-schools, were predicated on extensive changes in teaching methods.

Of the fourteen different alternative programs operating in Cincinnati in 1976-77 (most at multiple sites), we would classify about half as content-oriented and half as method-oriented. The former include the French, Spanish, and German bilingual programs (all for children whose native language is English), the Math-Science Academy, and the School for Creative and Performing Arts. Cincinnati's method-oriented programs include Montessori; Individually Guided Education; Multi-Age, Non-Graded; Fundamental Academy; and the Junior High College Readiness Program. It is difficult to classify the Elementary College Preparatory program in either of these categories, as it is essentially an accelerated academic track.

Cincinnati's content-oriented programs have generally required substantial curriculum development and the services of specially qualified teachers. For example, in the bilingual programs, language instruction is conducted by bilingual teachers who come into the regular classrooms for several short lessons each day or work with groups of students who are pulled out of their regular classrooms. Aside from accommodating the visiting language teacher and covering the rest of the academic curriculum in a shorter time, the demands for change by the regular classroom teachers in these programs are minimal.

Cincinnati's method-oriented programs differ among themselves in the degree of teacher change attempted, with most ranking relatively low on this dimension. Only the Individually Guided Education and Multi-Age, Non-Graded programs involve major changes in school organization, student-grouping practices, and teaching methods. Montessori programs employ techniques that differ significantly from those of regular schools, but they have been staffed only with teachers holding Montessori certification. The Fundamental Academy

and Junior High College Readiness Program do not entail major changes in teaching style or method.

Thus, there was substantial variation among these four districts in the types of educational changes undertaken in their alternative programs. In general, programs in Minneapolis (with the exception of the Contemporary Model) and Eugene have attempted to bring about major changes in the behavior of regular classroom teachers. For the most part, programs in Cincinnati and Alum Rock have not.

In sum, our sample districts represent four quite different alternatives systems in terms of size, goals, resources, patterns of program initiation, and types of programs. In the next chapter, we will show how these differences affected each district's handling of a number of management issues common to the implementation of alternatives.

IV. MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTING ALTERNATIVES

Once a school district adopts a policy of offering alternatives, it faces a series of decisions and tasks necessary to make that policy operational. Taken together, these decisions and tasks constitute the work of implementation. Alternatives systems may vary greatly from district to district (see Chapter III). Nevertheless, certain common challenges to implementation flow from the initial decision to introduce educational diversity and consumer choice into a public school system. This chapter compares how our four districts handled a number of these challenges and how the course of alternatives in each district was thereby affected.

To facilitate comparison across districts, the first six sections of this chapter depart from the case study organization we used to examine initiation and program design. Instead, each section focuses on a key management issue in the implementation of alternatives. The six issues are:

1. Assigning staff to alternatives.
2. Providing staff training and support.
3. Allocating facilities to alternatives.
4. Establishing procedures for student selection of programs.
5. Providing information to consumers.
6. Establishing procedures for parental participation in governance.

With each section, we describe the policy choices made by each district and some implementation difficulties that arose in the course of carrying out these policies. We will see that the implementation path of alternatives in each district was determined by the interaction of initial design choices, district management strategies, and the local institutional setting.

The implementation of alternatives is a complex process that engages the energy and attention of many people in a school system. Organizing our discussion of implementation around a series of discrete management decisions, as we have done in this chapter, makes it somewhat easier to present analyses of policy issues. At the same time, it risks understating the complexity of the implementation process and the interrelatedness of various policy components. For this reason, the final section of this chapter returns to a case study approach to review each district's overall role in managing implementation and providing support for its alternatives.

Assigning Staff to Alternatives

Staff characteristics and commitment appear to be critical to the effectiveness of educational programs (Fullan, 1972; Berman and McLaughlin, 1977b). Proponents of educational alternatives have argued that just as students differ in their learning styles, teachers differ in their teaching styles, and that alternatives can provide an opportunity for arranging a better match between teacher and learner (Fantini, 1973; Glatthorn, 1975; Smith et al., 1976). As we have seen, not all alternatives are based on stylistic differences; some emphasize particular subject matter. Such programs are usually designed to attract students with special interest or talent in these subjects and depend on staff with special teaching strengths in these fields. If a school district is in fact to offer distinct educational choices, it must therefore develop a staffing policy that takes account of differences in abilities and styles among teachers. However, as we shall see, bureaucratic and political constraints may interfere with the implementation of such a policy.

The very notion of matching programs, teachers, and learners, a basic goal of the educational alternatives movement, complicates the problem of staff allocation for a district. Barring the unlikely utopian situation in which teachers choose program assignments in precisely the numbers required for optimal staff/student ratios,

there will have to be a tradeoff between teachers' and students' preferences. Either some teachers will have to work in programs that are not their first choice, or some students will not be accommodated in their preferred alternative. Alum Rock, more than any of the other districts we studied, attempted to maximize consumer sovereignty in program choice. Alum Rock's original quasi-voucher model guaranteed that popular programs (mini-schools) would expand to accommodate all interested students, requiring that teaching assignments be adjusted to fit program enrollments. As discussed above, when mini-schools were first formed, most teaching assignments were made by the teachers themselves selecting the programs they preferred. The first fall's enrollment required some shifting of teachers between programs; virtually all students were admitted into their first choice program, whereas 76 percent of teachers reported teaching in the program they had most wanted.¹

During the demonstration, as some programs grew in enrollment and others declined, the mechanism for filling teacher vacancies became a controversial issue. Theoretically, if mini-schools were to develop unique programs and compete with each other for students and resources, they ought to have had the autonomy to hire the teachers they considered best suited to their needs. In practice, however, the district's established personnel policies prevented mini-schools from achieving full control of staffing. For example, mini-schools could not hire teachers from outside the district until they had first offered a vacant position to qualified teachers already employed by the district. This meant following standard district procedures for announcing vacancies through the central personnel office, a time-consuming process to which mini-schools and voucher principals objected. Superintendent Jefferds ruled, however, that exempting mini-schools from these procedures would violate the informal agreements the district had negotiated with its Certificated Employees Council.²

¹Alum Rock Teacher Survey, Fall 1972.

²It will be recalled that until 1976 personnel policies were not subject to collective bargaining in California school districts.

A test case in the first year of the demonstration established an even more restrictive aspect of hiring policy. A mini-school hired a new teacher from another district school, but the district personnel department ruled that another teacher at the same school had a prior right to the job, even though the mini-school did not want this teacher. The issue was raised before EVAC (the demonstration's parent-teacher advisory committee), which unsuccessfully petitioned the Board of Trustees to change this policy.

Within these limitations, voucher teachers had more direct say in choosing their colleagues than they had had prior to the demonstration, but less control than in other aspects of mini-school life.¹ In the second year of the demonstration, 57 percent of voucher teachers (as compared with only 13 percent of nonvoucher teachers) felt they had "a lot of influence" in hiring new teachers for their mini-schools, whereas 88 percent felt they had a lot of influence over curriculum decisions and 70 percent felt they had a lot of influence over budget decisions.² Moreover, mini-school control over hiring declined as the demonstration proceeded. At the end of year three, major financial cutbacks forced the district to lay off numerous teachers. Teachers were dismissed strictly according to seniority, without consideration of the special needs of individual mini-schools. On the subsequent Rand teacher survey, only 17 percent of voucher teachers still felt they had "a lot of influence" over staffing.³

¹ While mini-schools had less control of staffing than they would have liked, the changes in personnel assignment procedures brought about by the voucher demonstration seemed substantial to those in the central office who had exercised control over these matters in the past. The district's former personnel director, for example, recalls being somewhat shocked at the spectacle of principals and teachers from voucher schools coming into the central office to review the files of prospective staff members to select the ones that looked good to them. In the past, he would have decided which job candidates to send to which schools.

² Alum Rock Teacher Survey, Spring 1974.

³ Alum Rock Teacher Survey, Spring 1976.

Minneapolis, in developing its alternatives, has also attempted to accommodate teachers' program preferences insofar as they are consistent with student enrollment choices. Southeast Alternatives gave the teachers in its schools the option of choosing their preferred program or of transferring out of the project. Similarly, as alternatives have been introduced to other parts of the district, teachers have been allowed to select a program or to transfer to schools not involved in developing alternatives. For example, when seven neighborhood schools were merged to form an Expanded Community School, teachers were asked to indicate their order of preference among the three programs. Of the 107 teachers affected, only 11 had to accept their second choice of program, and none had to settle for their third choice. Assignments were made in order of seniority, so that the teachers not placed in their first choice program were more junior. Our data suggest that most teachers in the system are satisfied with their assignments--of those responding to our survey, only about 15 percent indicated that they would rather be teaching in another program or school.¹

Principals in Minneapolis report having fairly high discretion in staff hiring. While district rules provide that teachers have access to vacancies according to seniority, a principal is entitled to reject a teacher who is not "qualified" for a particular program, but must provide a written rationale for this decision. For continuous progress or open programs, a teacher's willingness to work in a team and acceptance of program philosophy are regarded as valid criteria for selection. Principals also have the option of resorting to an administrative transfer for teachers not working out in a particular program.

¹Rand Teacher Survey, Winter 1977. Future uses of teacher survey data from Minneapolis and Eugene are based on this same source and will not be referenced individually. For more extensive analysis of this survey data, see Rasmussen (1978), Vol. III in this series.

The right of district management to consider specific program needs when assigning teachers was tested and upheld in a recent court case in Minneapolis.¹ The Minneapolis Federation of Teachers sued the district on behalf of a teacher who was denied a requested transfer to which seniority would have entitled him. The area superintendent had granted an exception to the teacher transfer policy on the grounds that another teacher could better contribute to the educational program at the school in question. While the test case involved a position at a high school, rather than at one of the district's alternative schools, the court's ruling that teacher transfers are "inherent management policy," and therefore not subject to negotiation with the union, is seen by district administrators as enhancing their ability to maintain the distinctiveness of alternatives. The court took specific note of the district's alternatives program in its decision, alluding to the time, effort, and money the district had spent in training teachers for continuous progress and open schools. It found that, in addition to seniority and the wishes of the teacher, a number of other factors must be weighed in teacher transfer cases, including "whether the teacher has shown particular aptitude and ability for the particular program in which he is teaching;" "whether the teacher has received special training for the program in which he is teaching;" and "whether the teacher is an important part of a team of teachers so that his transfer would affect the success of the team."

While Minneapolis principals are ultimately accountable for staffing decisions at their schools, they have the discretion to

¹Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 v. Minneapolis Special School District #1, March 1976.

In October 1977, as this report was being prepared to go to press, the Minnesota Supreme Court reversed the trial court's decision in this case, holding that "the adoption of the criteria by which individual teachers may be identified for transfer is a proper subject for negotiation and, as such, is properly included in the collective bargaining contract." It is of course not yet known what types of transfer provisions the district and union will agree to in collective bargaining, or how this will affect assignment of staff to alternatives.

include other staff members in the teacher selection process. A number of principals we spoke with enlisted teachers in interviewing and choosing new colleagues.¹ This practice seems to be more common among principals of continuous progress and open programs, models which require greater teacher interaction and therefore greater staff compatibility. On the Rand teacher survey, 84 percent of open program teachers and 45 percent of continuous progress program teachers reported that they had "some influence" or "a lot of influence" over the selection of new teachers, while only 17 percent of contemporary program teachers felt this way.

Compared to Alum Rock and Minneapolis, where the implementation of alternatives has involved large numbers of staff, Eugene's system of alternatives is quite small. Altogether, its elementary alternatives employ only 35 certificated employees. Most of Eugene's original alternatives were staffed largely by teachers involved in developing the program proposals. This was naturally true of school-within-school alternatives, but was also the case with the nonschool-based magnet alternative proposals. Recently, however, the district has begun to depart from its informal tradition of giving proposal-writers priority consideration for alternatives jobs. In staffing one of its two new alternatives, a key member of the proposal-writing team was passed over by the personnel department, despite the recommendations of a staffing committee comprising teachers, parents, and students. This incident caused considerable consternation among some of Eugene's alternatives community, but the district's personnel director has suggested that automatic hiring of teachers involved in

¹In Southeast Alternatives Schools, participation in staffing decisions was extended even further. At Marcy Open School, an Advisory Council, composed of parent and staff representatives, all elected by parents, was involved in hiring new teachers. At Southeast Free School, the entire school community--staff, parents, and students--had a say in staffing decisions. Community participation in the hiring of staff has not been a common practice in alternatives in other parts of the district.

proposal development could lead out-of-work or untenured teachers to view alternatives as a mechanism for obtaining employment.¹

The procedure for filling vacancies on alternatives staffs in Eugene is the same as that for hiring teachers at other schools. The program submits a job description to the personnel office, which sends candidates to the school to be interviewed. The school may reject candidates it considers unqualified and must state its reasons for doing so. Selection criteria and acceptable reasons for rejecting a candidate are subject to negotiation with the personnel department. Alternative schools have attempted to make their job descriptions quite explicit to weed out candidates not compatible with their educational philosophy, and in most cases, have been able to hire the teachers they want, including some from outside the district. Eugene's alternative teachers usually play a major role in staffing decisions for their programs, which is not the case for other teachers in the district. Nineteen of the twenty-two alternative teachers who responded to the Rand survey felt they had "a lot of influence over the selection of new teachers," whereas only one-fifth of the regular teachers in the sample expressed this view.²

Eugene has also allowed its alternatives considerable freedom to experiment with unconventional staffing patterns. Several programs have converted certificated staffing position into slots for aides, volunteer coordinators, and part-time uncertificated resource staff in special fields. The district's ability to allow such practices probably depends in part on the small scale of the alternatives program. The Eugene Educators Association has expressed some dissatisfaction with this practice but has not pushed the issue to a

¹We do know of one successful proposal that was initiated by a teacher on temporary assignment at a school as a strategy for securing a permanent position on that staff.

²One of the district's elementary alternatives assigned responsibility for staffing decisions to its Steering Committee, composed of staff and parent representatives and the building principal. There were difficulties in implementing this plan, which will be considered in our discussion of parent participation in governance, later in this chapter.

confrontation. Were a larger number of certificated staff positions involved, however, stronger opposition from the teachers' association would probably result.

In Cincinnati, most alternatives have been staffed by teachers who applied on a voluntary basis.¹ Because of the specialized skills required by certain of its programs (e.g., bilingual, Montessori), some teachers have been recruited from outside the district, and, in a few cases, even from outside the country. The district has demonstrated a willingness to go to extra lengths to attract especially well-qualified staff for its alternatives.

The responsibility for selecting staff for alternatives has rested with the area superintendents, program coordinators, and principals, who have had district support for being unusually selective in teaching hiring. For the most part, they have not been restricted by seniority rules in selecting the teachers they deem most qualified for particular programs. Though Cincinnati principals generally rank their decisionmaking power with respect to teacher hiring as low (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1976a), alternative principals report considerable discretion in building their staffs. A principal we spoke with at a school with an Elementary College Preparatory Program said he had never had the ability to select staff before and regarded his new authority in this area as the single greatest advantage of working with an alternative program. While some principals said they involve teachers in making staffing decisions, this does not appear to be a widespread practice in Cincinnati.

Until recently, Cincinnati had encountered little opposition from its organized teachers for its hiring procedures for alternatives, but there are some signs of increasing union dissatisfaction as the alternative system grows. In an official position paper on alternative schools issued in March 1977, the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers complained that "no standard method of staff selection

¹The Individually Guided Education magnet programs represent an exception to this pattern. They were introduced into schools with existing staff, and teachers were given the option to remain or transfer to another school.

exists." The district has since formally adopted a certificated personnel staffing procedure for alternatives that would permit recruitment of applicants from outside the district only if the selection committee decides that no district teacher requesting a transfer or surplus district teacher is qualified for the job.

In sum, district management can support the development of distinct alternatives by adapting staff assignment procedures to accommodate the special needs of individual programs. The four districts in our sample did so to differing degrees. In Eugene, Cincinnati, and Minneapolis, alternatives have been able to exercise considerable discretion in selecting new teachers to suit program requirements. In Alum Rock, however, the mini-schools' ability to hire the teachers they preferred was seriously constrained by the district's adherence to pre-existing personnel procedures.

Providing Staff Training and Support

Districts introducing alternatives face the challenge of adapting staff assignment procedures to meet the special needs of different programs, and are sometimes constrained in their ability to do so by agreements with teachers' organizations. However, even if a district has complete staff assignment prerogatives, this may not entirely solve its problem of providing competent staff for alternative schools. It may be difficult to find teachers who already know how to teach in the desired way, especially where proposed alternative programs involve major changes in teaching style and method. Staff preparation and support therefore constitute another important management issue for districts implementing alternatives. As we shall see, our four sample districts differed considerably in their approaches to this problem.

In Alum Rock, each school that joined the voucher demonstration received \$30,000 in its first year for in-service training and program development. The district exercised no control over these funds;

expenditures were decided upon by the schools and mini-schools.¹ Most of this money went to pay teachers for the extra time they spent planning their programs during the summer and on weekends, rather than to purchase what would normally be considered training. A few mini-schools hired consultants to help them select new materials, but most relied exclusively on their own staffs for program and curriculum development. At the start of the demonstration, the services of the curriculum coordinators in the district's central office were "voucherized," which meant that purchase of these services was at the option of the mini-schools. Under this arrangement, mini-school demand for these services was not sufficient to provide the equivalent of full-time support for these specialists. Because the district remained responsible for their salaries regardless of the level of mini-school demand, the voucherization policy was discontinued after the second year of the demonstration.

As noted above, a majority of Alum Rock's mini-schools did not undertake major changes in their educational programs, which may help explain why most teachers did not feel a need for special training or outside help with planning and implementation. At the same time, where teachers were attempting more complicated reforms--like open classrooms or ungraded continuous progress instruction--their failure to turn to district staff for assistance may reflect a belief that district personnel were not sufficiently skilled or experienced in these innovations to offer guidance, a comment we heard from several teachers. From the district's perspective, a possible strategy might have been to sponsor opportunities for its support staff to develop their expertise about these innovations, by visiting programs

¹The district did have a centralized federal fund for demonstration-related training, but these monies were used to pay for the services of HRC, the organization development consulting firm that worked with groups of administrators and voucher school staffs (see Chapter III). Their efforts were aimed primarily at building commitment to the change process and developing management and problem-solving skills. This training did not relate directly to the educational changes being attempted in the mini-schools. For a fuller discussion of the role of organization development in the demonstration, see Weiler et al. (1974a), pp. 71-73.

in other districts, for example, so that they would have been in a better position to sell their services to teachers.

In Eugene, as we have described, nearly all the alternatives involved major changes in the structure and style of learning. At the same time, the superintendent's pledge that alternatives would cost no more than regular schools placed serious limitations on the resources available for staff training and planning. Before the alternatives opened the first year, the superintendent authorized a two-day in-service training program that was conducted jointly for all the new programs. The session was organized by the special projects assistant, with outside consultants who conducted workshops on curriculum development, open communication, and sexism in the classroom. Over the course of the next two years, the special projects assistant conducted about eight in-service workshops with alternative teachers to work on solving specific problems.

Some Eugene programs received money from their regional directors to cover staff planning time before they began operation, while others did not. For the most part, the work that teachers have put into program development and planning in Eugene has been done on their own unpaid time. Because the kinds of programs they were attempting were unfamiliar and generally demanded high levels of coordination among staff, considerable planning time was required, not just at the start of a program, but on an ongoing basis. Not surprisingly, the burden seems to have been heaviest for those programs that were starting from scratch. (It will be recalled that several of Eugene's alternatives were based on already functioning school-within-school arrangements.) Teacher "burn-out," a recognized danger in alternative schools generally (Barr, 1976), was frequently mentioned to us as a problem in Eugene. Two small school-within-school open programs in Eugene have closed because their staffs apparently could not cope with the heavy demands of planning and implementing their new classroom approaches.

Several teachers in open programs in Eugene commented to us that they had had no first-hand experience of how a well-implemented open classroom should operate. When asked on the Rand teacher survey about

the kinds of experiences their district had sponsored to prepare them for working in their programs, only five (25 percent) of the alternative teachers responding reported "observing in other classrooms" and only one teacher reported "interning in other classrooms." These few teachers tended to rate these experiences as being "very useful" for implementing their own programs. Other recent Rand research has also suggested that extended classroom observation may be particularly useful to teachers who are about to implement inherently amorphous innovations, such as open classrooms (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977b, pp. 111-112). However, providing opportunities for extended observation or internship is expensive, because it requires releasing teachers from their regular teaching responsibilities and, if good classroom models are not available nearby, it may also involve funds for travel. (In Minneapolis, where the district invested heavily in staff development for alternatives, 77 percent of the open school teachers who responded to our survey had observed in other classrooms and 51 percent had served as interns.)

While Eugene did not set aside any special funds for in-service training for alternative teachers, the alternative programs had access to the district's regular mechanisms for distributing in-service funds. This meant applying to their regional curriculum specialists or, during a period from January 1975 to June 1976, applying to the district's newly created Teacher Center.¹ While we did not obtain figures on the actual disbursements to alternative staffs for in-service activities from the regional offices and the Teacher Center,

¹The Eugene Teacher Center, another innovation initiated by Superintendent Payzant, never achieved widespread support among Eugene teachers. Some observers in the district suggest that many teachers viewed the Teacher Center as an instrument of manipulation by the administration rather than as an institution in which they could feel a sense of ownership. The Teacher Center was part of the newly formed Research, Development, and Evaluation Department, which some teachers viewed with suspicion. There was also widespread resentment among teachers at the elimination of the central office curriculum consultants, whom many had regarded as an important link with the administration. Because of its low level of utilization by teachers, it was decided after one year of operation not to renew funding for the Teacher Center.

several district officials and alternative teachers expressed the view that alternative teachers had probably received more than their proportional share of these funds. This was attributed partly to their own greater initiative in submitting proposals for in-service training, as well as to the generally supportive attitude of the regional administrators and Teacher Center director toward the alternatives.

Cincinnati, in contrast to Eugene, has allocated substantial local funds to cover the expenses of starting up alternatives. The kinds of alternative programs it offers, however, do not for the most part require extensive training of regular classroom teachers in new techniques or teaching styles. In the Elementary College Preparatory and Junior High College Readiness programs, for example, no special training has been provided for teachers. For a number of other alternatives--e.g., elementary bilingual, Montessori, Math-Science Academy--the district has assigned a coordinator to each program to develop curriculum, provide whatever in-service training is needed, and serve as a continuing source of technical assistance to the program's teachers. The amount of in-service training and the extent to which teachers have been involved in program planning and curriculum development have varied from program to program.

One Cincinnati alternative that does attempt major changes in school organization and classroom process is the Individually Guided Education (IGE) program, which has been implemented at three elementary schools and one junior high school, with plans to add two more elementary and one more junior high in 1977-78. Staff development is an integral component of the IGE model. IGE prescribes an organizational structure in which the school staff is divided into teams and, through the use of auxiliary teachers, each team of teachers is freed for one period during each school day for planning and staff development activities. Becoming an IGE school also requires extensive work with an outside facilitator and participation in a league of public and private IGE schools from several districts. Cincinnati has contracted for a local college to provide facilitation for its IGE schools; among all alternative programs, this is the district's largest single expenditure for staff development.

In Minneapolis, more than in the other three districts, staff development was a central strategy for implementing alternatives, in SEA as well as in the expansion of alternatives to other parts of the district. There were a number of unusual features of staff development efforts in Minneapolis: (1) the major role of a Teacher Center, (2) using SEA as a model for training other staff, (3) providing training for administrators, and (4) including aides and volunteers in many staff development activities.

The University of Minnesota/Minneapolis Public Schools (UM/MPS) Teacher Center, established in July 1973, grew out of the staff development needs of SEA but was intended to serve the entire district, with special emphasis on providing support for alternative programs (Hayen and Shryer, 1975).¹ A cooperative venture jointly funded by the University and the school district, with half its board members appointed by each institution, the Teacher Center developed a multifaceted program of pre- and in-service training related to alternatives.² The Teacher Center emphasized the principle of "control by consumers," i.e., by the people who used its services. An in-service committee composed mostly of teachers and parents was responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and funding staff development proposals submitted by school staffs. Former Superintendent Davis has noted that this system has an advantage over the more common arrangement in which administrators disburse in-service training funds, in that teachers may be less reluctant to reveal gaps in their knowledge or skills to a committee of their peers than they would be to the administrators who evaluate them (Davis and Hols, 1978).

¹During the first year of SEA, in-service monies were disbursed by the SEA staff development director. The second year of the project, the SEA Teacher Center was founded, to broaden the scope of staff development activities and decentralize decisionmaking in allocating resources. The SEA Teacher Center was superseded in year three by the UM/MPS Teacher Center.

²As of the 1977-78 school year, the Minneapolis Teacher Center is no longer funded directly by the Minneapolis Public Schools, though the district continues to purchase some of its services. Our discussion of its structure and methods of operation refers to the period during which it was jointly governed by the university and the district.

The UM/MPS Teacher Center brought teachers into the process of designing the kinds of training experiences they wanted to implement their diverse programs. At one non-SEA school that wanted to convert to an open school model, for example, the principal and five teachers took a course at the Teacher Center. Their joint class project was to plan and implement a staff development program for the entire school. Teacher Center staff frequently worked with individual schools to carry out needs assessments and then to design training activities to meet those needs.

SEA provided unique opportunities for preparing teachers from other parts of the district for implementing alternatives. The district gave teachers released time to visit SEA schools and observe various classroom models in operation. Many SEA staff members helped give in-service courses to serve other schools. The Southeast open school organized a special program to allow teachers from other schools to serve extended internships. (Half of the Minneapolis open school teachers in the Rand survey sample said they had interned in another open classroom.)

Minneapolis also took steps to prepare administrators for their role in alternatives. Under the aegis of the leadership development committee, the regular district committee responsible for planning professional growth opportunities for administrators, a variety of courses were offered for which participants received university graduate credit. These included one-day workshops to provide an overview of alternatives and a follow-up course consisting of site visits to alternatives in the Twin Cities and nearby communities. A more elaborate course, lasting one year, covered such topics as selection, training, and evaluation of personnel; selection of pupils; use of facilities; budget and finance; instructional groupings; reporting pupil progress; community involvement; and testing and evaluation. Participants included district and area administrators as well as school principals.

"Staff" development in Minneapolis alternatives was broadly construed to include paraprofessionals, parents, and other volunteers, in addition to teachers and administrators. Teacher-Center-funded projects at SEA schools included the training of volunteers in subjects ranging from tutoring reading to running photographic labs for small groups of children. Many of the workshops used to prepare teachers outside SEA for alternatives were opened to interested parents. For example, in one cluster, teachers and parents in the continuous progress and open programs participated in separate month-long summer planning sessions, during which they worked on "clarification of program, individualizing instruction, teaming procedures, and organizational details" (Minneapolis Public Schools, 1974, p. 10).

In addition to training opportunities, Minneapolis also provides special support to teachers in some of its alternatives in the form of full-time resource teachers who assist with curriculum development and program coordination. Area superintendents have discretionary budgets from which they have allocated extra staff positions to alternatives in their areas. Some programs have elected to use these funds to hire resource teachers while others have used them to hire aides or counselors.¹

Both staff development and staff support in Minneapolis thus reflect two characteristic features of the district's implementation strategy: central office support for individual programs combined with a reliance on decentralized decisionmaking about the precise form that support will take. This approach has led the central office to respond well to local preferences about the kinds of training and assistance needed for carrying out alternatives.

To review briefly, we observed two principal strategies whereby districts provided support for alternatives' staffs: teacher training and the provision of special resource staff to assist teachers in implementing new programs. Of the four districts we studied, Minneapolis has invested the most heavily in staff training and has also

¹In some schools the entire staff decided how to use these funds while in others the decision was made by the principal.

provided resource teachers in many of its alternative schools. Most of Cincinnati's programs have involved relatively little training of regular classroom teachers, but special coordinators have been assigned to work on curriculum development and to assist teachers in a number of programs. Eugene, with its restriction on extra resources for alternatives, has been able to provide little staff support. In Alum Rock, substantial federal funds were allocated to schools to cover initial planning costs, but very little was spent on teacher training or the services of resource staff.

Allocating Facilities to Alternatives

Theoretically, three types of facilities arrangements may be made for an alternative program: (1) It may occupy a district building by itself, (2) it may share a district building with another program or programs, or (3) it may occupy rented space in a building that does not belong to the district. At a time when most school districts find themselves with excess building capacity and tight finances, the third alternative is usually impractical. In our sample districts, we found only two examples of rented facilities for alternatives, and both of these cases were temporary arrangements until space could be provided in district buildings. We found numerous examples of both the first two arrangements, with multiprogram buildings being by far the more common. This section outlines each district's overall approach to facilities allocation, discusses the difficulties of placing alternative programs in buildings where they were not developed, and describes the problems associated with housing more than one program in the same building.

Depending on how districts start their programs, facilities allocation may be a more or less salient issue. The initial placement of programs into buildings was not a major issue in Alum Rock or Minneapolis where program location decisions emerged directly from the process of program development. In Alum Rock, teachers within each voucher school designed several programs to be offered in that

building. In Minneapolis's Southeast Alternatives, the proposal specified that each elementary school would offer a different choice. Elsewhere in Minneapolis, as administrators, teachers, and parents planned the kinds of alternatives they wanted in a particular area, surveys were taken to ascertain potential demand for each program and decisions were made about which building would house which program(s). Most schools followed the SEA pattern of offering a single alternative per school; seven Minneapolis elementary schools offer two or three alternatives in the same building.

Program location decisions were a more salient issue in both Eugene and Cincinnati. Half of Eugene's eight elementary alternatives were developed as school-within-school proposals by part of a school staff, so the program site was specified in the proposal. In the other four cases, however, the district decided where the program would be located after the proposal had been approved. Similarly, in Cincinnati, the district has usually developed concepts for programs and then decided which schools to place them in, primarily on considerations of space and school racial mix. Of the thirty-six alternative program sites operating in Cincinnati during 1976-77, six (including the four magnet schools) had their own buildings, while the other thirty shared buildings with regular district schools.¹

Placing Alternative Programs in Host Buildings

Judging from the experiences of Eugene and Cincinnati, placement of program into schools where they were not developed may be one of the most politically sensitive aspects of implementing alternatives. While this may be especially true where desegregation is involved, as in Cincinnati, it was also the case in Eugene, a racially homogeneous community. In both districts, we heard complaints about the process

¹One of these thirty programs, the School for Creative and Performing Arts, had its own full-time principal in the building. The two Montessori programs, one of which shared a building while the other had its own building, were both served by a single full-time principal. For the other twenty-eight programs that shared buildings, the principal was administrator for both the alternative and regular programs.

whereby location decisions were made, particularly that the preferences of local staffs and communities were not taken into account. It is clear that some programs in these districts were placed in schools where the staff and community, or part of the staff and part of the community, did not want them, but this may be inevitable where the interests of particular schools do not necessarily coincide with those of the district at large.

In Cincinnati, a variety of factors seemed to determine the degree of neighborhood support for proposals that their school play host to an alternative program. Some communities sought a specific alternative when neighborhood parents saw it as a desirable educational option for their children or as a way of stabilizing their school's racial mix, enhancing its image, or increasing its resources. In particular, several schools threatened by closing because of declining enrollment welcomed an alternative that would help keep the neighborhood school program open.¹ Racial hostilities have engendered resistance to alternatives' being placed in several previously segregated schools.

A district like Cincinnati that seeks to promote voluntary desegregation through alternatives may be less concerned with the reception an alternative program receives from those already associated with a school, than with its potential for attracting students of both races. If minority students are not to bear a disproportionate share of the travel burden, efforts must be made to overcome white parents' reluctance to send their children to predominantly black inner-city schools. In Cincinnati, a few programs have been started in relatively "attractive" sites and later moved to schools in "less desirable" neighborhoods. While parents may protest such moves, it appears that once their children are involved in and committed to a

¹The opposite also occurred in one case. Cincinnati moved its popular and growing School for Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA) into a large under-utilized inner-city junior high despite vocal community protests that it would "take over" their school. Despite earlier district reassurances to the contrary, the superintendent has now recommended that the neighborhood program be closed and that the SCPA be given the entire building.

program, school location becomes a less significant factor in enrollment decisions. Parents may allow children to follow a program to a location where they might not have enrolled them initially.¹

Eugene's experience suggests that community or staff resistance to an alternative's being placed in a particular building may merely reflect strong feelings about program philosophy and a territorial sense about the neighborhood school. District staff may calculate on the basis of enrollment and square footage that a school building has the surplus space to house an alternative. But their determinations may not coincide with the perceptions of people in that school. For example, teachers may be using supposedly excess classrooms as learning centers, tutoring stations, or for other special purposes. They are not likely to want to give up this flexibility to accommodate an outside program in their school, particularly if they disagree with its philosophy or perceive it as an indictment of their own performance.

In Eugene, there was substantial community and staff conflict over the location of three of the four elementary alternatives that did not evolve as schools-within-schools. Two of Eugene's original alternatives were placed in underenrolled South Eugene schools over the protests of some parents and staff at these schools who wanted to maintain their traditional programs undisturbed. Since most of the supporters for these two programs also came from the same neighborhoods, the district was in the difficult position of trying to be responsive to a sharply divided community. Several years later, after the board approved a parent-generated proposal for a Traditional Alternative School, the district decided to divide it into K-3 and 4-6 components and to house classes at two separate sites. At one of the two proposed sites, there was such profound community and staff opposition to the program that the district backed down; instead, a smaller K-6 program was developed at the other site. Eugene's superintendent has recently announced that the district will no longer

¹Of course, a district would have to be wary about using this strategy too often.

encourage development of alternatives, other than schools-within-schools, that are developed by local school staff and parents. This decision was rooted in past difficulties of gaining acceptance for externally developed programs in neighborhood schools, as well as the diminished number of district buildings with substantial surplus space and the district's inability to provide free transportation.

Problems of Multiprogram Buildings

In the districts we studied, there were frequently problems when more than one program shared a building, whether the alternative program developed from within the school or was installed from outside. Sometimes problems arose in trying to work out such practical matters as scheduling the use of common facilities--lunchroom, gym, and playground. Where programs within a school differed significantly in educational philosophy, particularly in regard to student behavior and discipline, coexistence was still harder. If one program enjoyed--or even seemed to enjoy--more resources or better working conditions than another, relations between the staffs were likely to be strained.

The design of the Alum Rock demonstration created an obvious potential for friction between programs in the same building, because it required mini-schools to compete with each other to attract students and the voucher monies they would bring with them. The original rules of the demonstration called for popular programs to expand in response to student demand. In practice, most mini-schools did not try to expand, but rather preferred to keep their enrollments constant. There were a number of reasons for this: Teachers did not benefit financially from increased enrollment, most teachers preferred working in relatively small groups, mini-schools did not have control over who would be added to their staff, and it was hard to get enough space for expansion.¹ Nonetheless, even though the usual goal was to

¹In the first year of the demonstration, OEO made a one-time allocation of funds to rent portable classrooms for several overcrowded mini-schools. In the second year, OEO included \$36,000 in its grant to Alum Rock as a "space voucher" pool (\$4 per student), on which oversubscribed mini-schools could draw to rent portables. EVAC was to develop the rules for eligibility for this money. As it

maintain stable enrollment, most (85 percent) voucher teachers perceived at least some degree of competition among mini-schools for students, and one-third perceived "a great deal" of competition for students, although responses varied considerably from school to school.¹

In addition to direct competition for students, mini-school leaders interviewed by Rand in the spring of 1975 reported other types of competition among mini-schools in a building. They frequently mentioned examples of competition for status, e.g., teachers and students boasting about their own program and "putting down" others; and for resources, e.g., individual mini-schools' appropriating materials or equipment belonging to the building. All of these types of competition contributed to a fairly widespread perception by teachers of tension among mini-schools. Thirty-seven percent of the voucher teachers considered tension among mini-schools to be a "major problem" (including more than half the teachers at four of the thirteen voucher schools), and another 44 percent felt it was a "minor problem."²

In Eugene, the level of tension between alternative and regular programs in some buildings was substantial in the past but has now subsided considerably. When asked whether tension between programs had ever been a problem in their school, 30 percent of the alternative teachers and 27 percent of the regular teachers in the same buildings said it had been a major problem; 50 percent of the alternative teachers and 42 percent of the regular teachers said it had been a minor problem. Regarding tensions this year, however, only 5 percent and 11 percent, respectively, considered it a major problem,

turned out, this mechanism for gaining funds for expansion of space proved awkward and time-consuming. Another attempt to solve the space problem, by developing "satellite" classrooms of popular programs at other schools, was attempted by one school in the second year, but was abandoned because of friction with the host school and ambiguities about administrative responsibility for the satellite.

¹ Alum Rock Teacher Survey, Spring 1975.

² Alum Rock Teacher Survey, Spring 1975.

while 38 percent (alternative) and 35 percent (regular) saw it as a minor problem. Problems between staffs have generally been most severe where the alternative was installed by the district rather than having evolved from within the school.¹ Judging from our personal interviews, the improvement in relations in these cases is partly attributable to the fading of old grievances with the passage of time and partly to a tendency on the part of the alternatives to become less stridently "different" after a few years' experimentation.

No extra resources have in fact been allocated to Eugene's alternatives, but other teachers sometimes perceive that the alternatives received favored treatment. About half the regular teachers in multi-program schools thought that "fairness in allocating funds to programs" had been a problem in their school in the past, and about one-third still think it is. An interesting example of perceived inequity may be seen in one school where the alternative program has chosen to forgo the use of resource teachers to maintain the district's standard 18.4 to 1 student-teacher ratio in its homerooms. Teachers in the rest of the school make use of a reading specialist, a physical education teacher, a counselor, and a media specialist, all of whom are included in calculating the student-teacher ratio, which results in noticeably larger homerooms. The regular teachers have expressed resentment about the seemingly lighter teaching loads of the alternative teachers, although they could also reduce homeroom size by eliminating specialists if they so chose.

Principals and teachers we spoke with in several Cincinnati schools reported tensions between alternative and host school staffs. Since allocation of additional resources to alternative programs is a matter of explicit policy, the juxtaposition of regular and alternative programs in the same building seems to create fertile ground

¹One school-within-school alternative in Eugene, aware of the bad experiences of some of its predecessors, paid special attention to building support among the regular teachers in its school and has enjoyed unusually good interprogram relations. The initiators of this program presented their proposal to the regular school staff and allowed them to vote on whether they wanted the program at their school. They also involved some of the regular teachers in the design of the program.

for envy and resentment. Class sizes in alternatives are generally lower than the district's standard 28 to 1. Some alternatives also provide teachers with extra planning periods, and alternatives often receive special equipment and materials. In some cases, regular teachers in the building also feel that the alternatives have attracted their "best" students, which is another source of displeasure.

Most Minneapolis alternatives occupy a building by themselves and thereby escape the problems of intraschool rivalries between programs, but seven Minneapolis elementary schools do offer more than one educational program. At the three multiprogram schools included in our teacher survey, 42 percent of our respondents cited tension between programs as a major problem this year and another 45 percent said it was a minor problem. Disparities in resources seemed to be one source of the difficulties. Forty-one percent of the teachers responding felt there was currently a major problem surrounding "fairness in allocating funds to programs" and another 44 percent regarded this as a minor problem. During our visit to one of these schools we encountered an example of the type of funding allocation seen by some teachers as unfair. The principal had used the school's discretionary staff allotment to hire a resource teacher for the continuous progress program, and aides to serve the entire school, but had not provided a resource teacher for the contemporary program. / When the contemporary teachers complained, he had told them they did not need a resource teacher because "they weren't doing anything new."

As we have seen, in each of our sample districts, there were problems associated with housing more than one program in the same building, but tensions varied from school to school within the same district. It was our impression that principals played a critical role in either mediating or exacerbating conflict between program staffs, which suggests that district management should exercise special care in assigning principals to multiprogram buildings. For an extended treatment of the relationship between principals' behavior and tension in multiprogram schools, see Vol. II in this series, Thomas (1978).

Establishing Procedures for Student Selection of Programs

We have defined alternatives to mean an arrangement in which parents can choose the schools and/or programs their children attend.¹ This contrasts with the traditional system of student placement in which the district assigns a student to a school, usually on the basis of age and residence. A choice-based attendance system presents a number of challenges to a school district, depending in part on the goals its alternatives are intended to serve. Rules must be established to govern consumer choices: Will students be equally eligible for all alternatives regardless of residence, or will alternatives serve particular geographic areas? How will students be selected if there is excess demand for a program? How will program capacities be adjusted to accommodate demand? Will ethnicity be considered in admissions?

This section describes how our four districts dealt with these issues in developing their systems of choice. It also examines the organizational tensions that can arise over the questions of student screening and recruitment.

Overall Organization of Choice

There are two fundamentally different ways of organizing admissions into alternative programs. One is to offer alternatives that are open to any student regardless of residence. The other is to offer alternatives that (primarily) serve students from a specific attendance area.

During the Alum Rock voucher demonstration, all students living in the catchment areas of voucher schools (about half the district by 1973-74) could choose to attend any mini-school in any building. The only restriction on this was a so-called "squatters' rights" provision

¹ Depending on their age and the ways in which decisions are made in their families, students would also be involved to some extent in these decisions.

that was in force for the first two years of the demonstration. It guaranteed students enrolled prior to the demonstration, and their younger siblings not yet in school, the right to continue attending their neighborhood school. Squatters' rights were eventually abolished because most people chose neighborhood schools. At the height of the demonstration, in year three (1974-75), 26 percent of the students in the demonstration were enrolled in programs outside their neighborhood school (St. Pierre et al., 1975, p. 20). The large majority of Alum Rock parents and students preferred to exercise their right of choice within the neighborhood school.

Whereas in Alum Rock all voucher students had to register a choice of programs, in Cincinnati only students opting out of their regular school assignment must register a choice. Very few of Cincinnati's alternative schools have geographical attendance areas. The exceptions are several so-called "magnet schools" which are designed to serve a neighborhood population but also to attract transfer students to enhance racial balance. The remaining alternatives draw students from the entire district. Several of them do, however, reserve a certain number of places for students from the host school, a policy aimed at promoting community acceptance for the program.

Eugene has two types of alternatives. Its schools-within-schools give priority in admissions to neighborhood students, accepting transfers only if there are vacancies. Its magnet schools have no attendance areas and are supposed to serve the entire district. In practice, however, because the district does not provide transportation, most magnet schools also draw disproportionately from adjacent neighborhoods.

Minneapolis alternatives may serve a single attendance area (multiprogram school), a cluster of attendance areas (desegregation clusters or Expanded Community Schools), an entire administrative area of the district (e.g., North Area Open School), or the entire city (Southeast Alternatives). A student who lives in the catchment area of a multiprogram school, a desegregated cluster of schools, an Expanded Community School, or in Southeast must register a choice of program. Students residing in other catchment areas (i.e., of schools

not offering alternatives) may elect to attend an alternative program in their administrative area or one of the Southeast alternatives, but register choices only when they wish to enroll in a school other than their home school.

Program Capacity

Program capacity often restricts consumers' exercise of free choice in an alternatives system. Where demand for a particular program exceeds available places, a district has two choices: to enlarge the program or to establish a mechanism for choosing among applicants. Of the four districts we studied, only Alum Rock, with its quasi-voucher model, set out to guarantee all students immediate access to their first choice programs. It was planned that popular programs would expand, at their original sites and then at satellite sites, to accommodate all applicants. At the start of the demonstration, students technically had the right to transfer between programs at any time of the year. However, this system proved unworkable in practice. Most teachers opposed unrestricted transfers during the school year, because of the disruptions it caused in their programs and the problems it created for planning and budgeting. During the first year, mini-schools won the right to close off new admissions "temporarily" until they obtained additional facilities, but the district allowed these "temporary" closings to last indefinitely. At one point during the first year, only one voucher school was accepting new students.

In the first year of the demonstration, all voucher students who enrolled before the opening of school in the fall were admitted to their first choice programs, but the rules were changed for the second year to guarantee students their first choice program only if they enrolled before a May 25 deadline. Mini-schools could then set enrollment limits if they wished, and most did so. Where subsequent applications exceeded vacancies, places were filled by a lottery in June, and after that on a first-come, first-served basis. The following year, the rules were revised once again. Students

were again guaranteed their first choice until May 25. At that point, each school had the option of continuing open enrollment in its mini-schools until the building was filled, or setting enrollment ceilings for each mini-school based on the proportion of applications already received for each program. Half the schools chose each option.

Some have criticized this gradual adaptation of Alum Rock's rules of choice for diminishing parents' access to their first choice program. It is important to note that, for the duration of the demonstration, Alum Rock continued to adjust program sizes each spring to accept all students applying before the deadline into their preferred programs. Restrictions took effect only after that date, to allow programs to arrange staff and facilities for the following year.

In retrospect, it is apparent that Alum Rock's transitional voucher model envisioned a degree of responsiveness to consumer demand that far exceeded that of the private school market, and did not take into account the practical difficulties of program expansion. It does not therefore seem surprising that the school system continuously modified the demonstration rules to accommodate its own needs for a more certain planning environment.

The system for adjusting supply to demand that Alum Rock eventually relied on parallels the approach Minneapolis has used to solve the problem of program capacity. Minneapolis has planned its alternatives in accordance with enrollment projections based on parent surveys. Each spring, if there is a sizable shift in student program selections, staff are reassigned to accommodate the demand. During the year, waiting lists are maintained for new students who wish to enroll in programs that are filled.

Eugene has left it to individual programs to set policies on admissions. Several programs enrolled students initially on the basis of lotteries. Most programs now admit students on a first-come, first-served basis. One school-within-school accords preference in admissions to siblings of children already enrolled, as a way of

rewarding parents who supported them in establishing the program. Several schools-within-schools have resisted expansion even though they cannot accept all applicants, because they do not wish to jeopardize relations with the staff of the host school.

In Cincinnati, within the established racial balance guidelines for alternatives (discussed below), students are accepted into most programs on a first-come, first-served basis, with waiting lists maintained for oversubscribed programs. The district has also used the strategy of expanding popular alternative programs to new sites.

Racial Balance

Racial balance has not been a factor in setting up alternatives in Eugene, which has hardly any minority students. Alum Rock's voucher schools, where approximately two-thirds of the students are of minority background, were on the whole racially and ethnically balanced prior to the voucher demonstration, and the exercise of parent choice did not alter this situation, although admissions were not regulated by race or ethnicity.¹ Both Minneapolis and Cincinnati have used alternatives to help achieve racial balance, but their strategies for doing so have been quite different.

In Minneapolis, alternatives have been developed in the context of a comprehensive desegregation plan. Much of the planning for alternatives has taken place within clusters of schools organized largely for purposes of desegregation. It was felt that transportation for educational choice would be more acceptable to the community than transportation purely for desegregation purposes, and school clusters were selected so as to ensure racially balanced student populations. There was, of course, the possibility that, under a system of free choice, programs would become segregated. Preliminary surveys of parent program preferences during the planning stages suggested that this would not be the case. Majority and minority parents in Minneapolis have not in fact differed substantially in

¹For analysis of the effects of the voucher demonstration on student distribution among schools, see Rasmussen (1975).

their preferences among alternatives, so racial balance has been achieved voluntarily within clusters, without regulation of admissions by race. All but a few Minneapolis alternatives are presently within the district's racial balance guidelines (no more than 35 percent of one minority; no more than 42 percent total minority).

Racial balance is, of course, a primary consideration in enrolling students in Cincinnati's alternatives. The district's student population is approximately 50 percent black and 50 percent white, and alternative school enrollments are allowed to range between ratios of 70/30 either way. Until this year, Cincinnati had considered only a student's impact on the racial makeup of the alternative school in accepting applications, not the effect of that student's transfer on the racial balance of the (sending) neighborhood school. There was concern, however, that alternatives were having a deleterious effect on the racial balance of some sending schools. For the 1977-78 school year, therefore, a system has been devised for weighting applications to consider the impact a transfer will have on both the receiving and sending school. A number of Cincinnati alternatives having waiting lists of black applicants who can be accepted only if additional white students apply. For each additional white applicant, two black students can be admitted.

Student Screening and Recruitment

Cincinnati has some alternatives that apply criteria other than ethnicity in admitting students. Screening students for alternatives has generated considerably controversy in Cincinnati, as critics of screening accuse alternatives of being elitist, while supporters argue that some screening is necessary to ensure program success. The only Cincinnati programs formally authorized to screen admissions have been the School for Creative and Performing Arts, which requires students to demonstrate artistic skill or potential in an audition; and the Elementary College Preparatory and Junior High College Readiness programs, which require students to have demonstrated average or above average academic ability or achievement. The bilingual

programs have also been allowed to screen out students with learning disabilities or visual, hearing, or speech defects.

In practice, however, there have been other instances of what could be termed screening. One of the bilingual programs has required references from kindergarten teachers to assure that applicants are of at least average ability. Several programs have used pre-admission interviews with prospective students and their parents as a way of assessing the child's and family's interest and motivation, factors they consider to be critical to the success of optional programs. Until last year, the final decision on a student's admission rested with the program.

Because of growing criticism that alternatives are selecting the "cream" of Cincinnati's students, and unfairly denying opportunities to other students, the district's policies on screening have been revised for the 1977-78 school year. Alternatives may no longer require interviews as a precondition of acceptance; they have two weeks from the time an application is filed to try to arrange an interview with the student's parents. At the end of this period, even if no interview has been held, the family will automatically be notified of acceptance, provided the application meets racial balance criteria. Also, parents have been given the final say about their child's program placement; the staff may counsel a family against enrolling a child in a program, but if the family insists and racial balance criteria are satisfied, the child must be accepted.

It has yet to be seen how these new rules will operate in practice, but they have been opposed by many alternative school principals and teachers. Some alternatives staffs regard pre-admissions interviews as a crucial vehicle for explaining their program and answering parents' and students' questions, and therefore object strongly to their being made optional. One principal wondered whether, with these new rules, "downtown will back us up" in removing students who are not "making it" in a program. Several principals and teachers commented that pressure to meet racial balance quotas has led to some unwise recruiting that jeopardizes the quality of

alternatives and does a disservice to students who are not really interested in or cannot handle the work. For example, a principal of a school with an elementary bilingual program commented: "They were so eager to have racial balance that they took anyone. I feel they should have been more selective. Some kids have no business being in this program. We have lost some and we still have some who don't belong in this program. If a student is having trouble reading, it's unfair to spend time in [foreign language] when he could be in reading. How will they be able to read [foreign language] and English both when they can't even read English?"

Some opponents of selective entrance criteria for alternatives argue that if neighborhood schools must accept all students, alternative programs should be required to do the same. This argument, others say, ignores the district's deliberate strategy of making alternatives special. The dilemma faced by the school district is that it may be the very elitism of the alternatives, the selectivity that enables them to maintain higher academic standards than the neighborhood school, that makes them sufficiently attractive to advance the district's voluntary desegregation goals.

Alternatives introduce a new organizational element into a school district: competition for students. Wherever this occurs, there is the potential for creating new tensions. In Eugene, for example, representatives of the alternative high schools reported that the regular high schools sometimes made it difficult for them to make presentations or distribute materials to students about their new programs. Eugene's high schools were especially sensitive to the potential loss of staff positions through student transfer to alternatives.

In Cincinnati, tensions over competition for students between regular and alternative schools seem to be aggravated by two factors: the perception by many staff that the competition is aimed particularly at the "better" students in the system, and the feeling that regular schools are competing at a disadvantage because of extra resource allocations to alternatives. The creation of some "special"

schools in a district does raise questions of equity. Many people in Cincinnati have expressed concern over the long-term impact of alternatives on the district's neighborhood schools. Whatever the ultimate impact, there is an effect on the district's present attempts to recruit students for alternatives.

Cincinnati's efforts to mobilize principals to promote its alternative programs have met with less than uniform success. A 1976 Cincinnati Handbook for Principals, entitled "Recruiting for and Sustaining Interest in Alternative Programs," tells principals: "Essentially you are attempting to interest people in a new product [alternative programs], and you will find yourself in the role of salesperson." In practice, some principals have apparently been reluctant salespersons because they are concerned about the impact alternatives will have on their own schools. We heard of one principal who had refused to send home with students the district's booklet describing alternatives. In another incident, a school administrator had instructed a teacher not to supply the necessary reference needed by a student applying to an alternative program. While it was difficult for us to gauge the frequency of such incidents, it appears that Cincinnati principals have mixed incentives to direct students toward alternative programs. The prospect of losing some of their most motivated students and families to other schools is of real concern to some principals. At the same time, several principals we spoke with said it would be "unprofessional" for a school administrator or teacher to prevent a student from attending the best available alternative. Administrators and teachers may also seek to protect the academic standards of their own programs, believing that they too can offer a high quality education at the neighborhood school. In some cases, there may even be a perverse economic incentive for principals: The district's principal salary schedule now links salary to size of school, and could therefore potentially penalize a principal for channeling students into alternatives.

The district administration is sensitive to these problems and is taking steps to try to solve them. To try to assure neighborhood

school cooperation in the alternatives recruitment effort in the spring of 1977, the central office sent a memo to all principals asking them to confirm that they had distributed the alternatives booklets, and requiring them to schedule a meeting at their school to inform parents of available options. The district provided speakers for these meetings. Such monitoring and enforcement efforts by the district can probably increase pro forma participation in the mechanics of recruitment and reduce obstructionism by regular schools. But it is still questionable whether regular school administrators and staffs can be depended upon to support recruitment efforts sincerely when some of them perceive alternatives as being inimical to the best interests of their own schools.

To summarize, rules for admitting students to alternatives have differed in our four sample districts, reflecting the structure and goals of their alternatives systems. In Eugene, the smallest of the four alternatives systems, school-within-school alternatives serve primarily neighborhood populations, while magnet schools draw from the entire district. Individual programs have been allowed to determine their own size and set their own policies on admission. Alum Rock's transition voucher model, in contrast, attempted to ensure immediate responsiveness of program supply to consumer demand, but mini-school expansion proved difficult to accomplish in practice, because of space limitations and teacher preferences for relatively small, stable working groups. Rules for student admissions were gradually adapted over the first few years of the demonstration to strike a balance between the interests of educational consumers and suppliers.

While both Minneapolis and Cincinnati have used alternatives to improve racial balance in the schools, their approaches have differed considerably. For the most part, Minneapolis students choose a program within a geographically based cluster of schools. This system has succeeded in achieving racially balanced schools, without specifically screening applicants by race. In Cincinnati, however, most alternatives do not serve a geographic attendance area, and

admissions are regulated to achieve racial balance. Cincinnati's rules for student selection into alternatives have been a source of controversy in the system, and have recently been revised to consider the impact of a student transfer on the racial balance of the sending school, and to give parents (rather than program staff) the final say on a student's admission into an alternative.

Providing Information to Consumers

An effective system of educational options depends in large part on the ability of consumers to make choices they will be satisfied with. This in turn requires that they be well informed about the various programs available to them. Educating parents and students about specific program options and the selection process represents a major challenge when alternatives are initiated, and must also be of continuing concern for a district as new programs emerge and existing ones change.¹

Both Southeast Alternatives in Minneapolis and the voucher project in Alum Rock devoted substantial amounts of their federal funds to providing information to the public about alternatives. Their experiences in this area differed significantly, however, reflecting the differences in their communities, the number of alternatives being offered, and the local politics of educational change.

In the Alum Rock voucher demonstration, public information policies were a major source of contention between voucher school principals and the central voucher staff. The debate centered on the issue of whether information about the mini-schools should be provided to parents by a source other than the schools themselves, and it had its roots in the structure of OEO's regulated compensatory voucher model. Critics of voucher schemes had noted the potential

¹A detailed analysis of the sources of information used by Alum Rock parents in making their program selections may be found in Bridge and Blackman (1978), Vol. IV in this series.

problem of "hucksterism" in education, arguing that, under a voucher plan, unscrupulous educational advertisers would be able to take advantage of poorly informed parents. To guard against such a possibility, the Center for the Study of Public Policy, in developing its proposed voucher model for OEO, provided for an independent Education Voucher Agency, among whose responsibilities would be the evaluation of participating schools and the distribution to parents of evaluative and other school information (Center for the Study of Public Policy, 1970). While there was no independent voucher agency under Alum Rock's public-schools-only version of vouchers, a number of its functions, including evaluation and information distribution, were vested in the central voucher staff (Joel Levin and the Sequoia Institute). The problems that arose in implementing this model of a central information mechanism, operating independently of the schools, may be seen by examining two key issues: the role of paraprofessional parent counselors, and the distribution of evaluative information.

In the spring of 1972, at the start of the demonstration, voucher school parents received an information packet containing an illustrated bilingual booklet entitled, "What is a Voucher?" and the descriptions teachers had provided of the twenty-two newly created mini-schools. To supplement these written materials, most schools also held meetings for parents where the various options were explained. In addition, the central voucher staff hired more than a dozen bilingual paraprofessional parent counselors, who personally contacted as many parents as possible to inform them further about the demonstration. Their instructions were specifically *not* to assist parents in making choices, but to inform them about the programs available so they could make their own choices. Parent counselors reported, however, that many parents found it very difficult to understand the differences between programs and wanted them to recommend specific programs. (The brief descriptions of the mini-schools were, in fact, rather general. The large number of programs in Alum Rock, many of whose titles were not particularly descriptive of their content or approach, continued to be a source of confusion to many parents throughout the demonstration.)

The precise role that parent counselors were to play in the demonstration was ill-defined at first, and soon became a subject of dispute. There appears to have been a built-in contradiction in the job as originally conceived. On the one hand, the voucher model demanded that parent counselors be independent and even critical of the schools. But on the other hand, they required the cooperation of the schools to learn about programs and to communicate with parents. They did not always receive this cooperation because, in some cases, they were perceived by school staff as hostile outsiders, an image the counselors themselves did not always help to dispel. Some parent counselors construed the responsibility of "informing" parents in very broad terms. These individuals thought their role should be to organize the parents of Alum Rock and serve as their advocates, and, in the words of one counselor, "to help parents to be dissatisfied with the schools." They felt that, particularly in a community with many poor Mexican-American parents, who traditionally were reluctant to assert themselves with school authorities, a basic educating and "consciousness raising" function was necessary before parents could exercise their rights effectively under the voucher demonstration.

Voucher principals were opposed to the creation of an independent, assertive parent counseling staff. Early in the first year of the demonstration, they won the right to order parent counselors in a given school community to cease any activity that a principal found unacceptable. In the second year, counselors, instead of operating in the community at large, were each assigned to serve specific school communities. What started out as an independent counseling effort thus came to operate under the de facto control of principals for the duration of the demonstration.

From the start of the demonstration, the central voucher staff also felt strongly that parents should receive not just program descriptions provided by the mini-schools, but also objective evaluative information that would enable them to compare mini-schools. Voucher principals objected immediately to such an evaluation plan, partly on the grounds that comparative information on program

performance--which would inevitably mean standardized test scores--would inhibit mini-schools from innovating. It was therefore agreed to postpone publicizing achievement test scores until the end of the second year of the demonstration. However, for the first year, the central voucher staff's coordinators of evaluation and public information did win the right, after laying their jobs on the line about this issue, to circulate certain standard information to parents at each mini-school about that mini-school: the results of a parent survey (if one had been conducted at the request of the mini-school), analysis of how compensatory voucher funds had been spent, a report on class size and student attendance, and a brief profile of teacher experience and parent involvement. Because each family received only the report on its own children's mini-school(s), however, there was no basis for making comparisons. Parents could obtain other reports from the central voucher office, but this fact was not publicized and few did so.

At the end of the second year of the demonstration, evaluation information was again not distributed to parents, this time because of technical problems in analyzing test scores. By the end of the third year of the demonstration, the voucher evaluation staff had developed an impressive new information package. It included comparative information by program on student cognitive performance and attitudes toward school, as well as booklets on how to interpret program results, how to visit schools, and how to select programs. By this time, however, a number of decisions had already been made that augured the eventual phase-out of vouchers in Alum Rock, so the comparative information was less significant than it might have been earlier in the demonstration. Also, it has been argued that despite the thorough content and visually engaging format of the evaluation booklet, its very size--it described more than fifty programs--was likely to overwhelm all but the most assiduous reader.

In contrast with Alum Rock, those responsible for providing public information in Southeast Alternatives in Minneapolis had a number of distinct advantages: They were dealing with a generally

better-educated and better-informed community; there was no presumption of antagonism between project staff and school personnel; and they had a relatively simpler task at hand, namely educating parents about the project's three elementary school models and the Free School. Also, by the time the project began, "most elementary families already knew what the range of choices meant" (Morley, 1976, p. 63). Three people were hired as community liaisons to assist in the initial school selection process, and they were assisted by parent volunteers in sending out flyers and brochures, holding neighborhood and PTA orientations, conducting phone campaigns and even some door-to-door canvassing to record parent choices.

As the project progressed, SEA's public information staff developed a multifaceted approach to keeping its consumers informed about their options. The final report of SEA's internal evaluation (Morley, 1976, p. 151)¹ describes one major information channel as follows:

In visibility and volume, the main means of broadcasting what people needed to know in Southeast was an SEA newspaper. From the fall of Year-1 it went bi-monthly, by mail, to all school families, and, of course, to all the staff. In 8-12 pages it combined the practical and the promotional. There were full bus schedules, details of transfer procedures, and general program descriptions of the different schools. In each issue [the editor] was careful to include feature material from each school, and often from SEA's non-school components. The stories and photos on particular programs or people, were balanced by equal space for general matters that touched everyone--the results of evaluation surveys among parents, for instance, and the question of merging SEA with a larger administrative area. By regularly sending every home both school-based and project-wide articles together, the newspaper medium itself was an up-beat message of SEA unity in SEA variety.

¹By way of comparison, it is interesting to note that the Alum Rock voucher staff began a newspaper to all parents but discontinued it after the first few issues.

Other informational devices used by SEA were a slide-tape show, a speakers' bureau consisting of parents and staff from each building, brochures produced by each school with the assistance of professionals, and text-and-photo booklets covering the entire project. There was also a regular visitors day each Wednesday for all SEA schools, with project-wide scheduling and coordination handled by the public information office. SEA parents surveyed in 1974 (Reynolds, 1976) considered visiting schools to be the most valuable source of information about them (as compared to more indirect methods like brochures, the SEA newspaper, and community meetings).

SEA itself formed a springboard for efforts to inform other areas of Minneapolis about alternatives. In the fall of 1974, for a period of three weeks, a special Information Sharing Project was conducted. Intensive one-week visits to SEA were arranged for people from each of the district's three administrative areas. About one hundred people from each area--including administrators, teachers (given release time) and parents--spent one-half day in each alternative school, met with the SEA director, evaluators, Teacher Center staff, and members of the Southeast Council. "As nearly as possible, it was a total immersion experience." (Morley, 1976, p. 153.)

As noted in our earlier discussion of strategies for establishing alternative programs, Minneapolis attempted to include parents in the planning of educational options throughout the district. Unlike Alum Rock, where in most cases parent information meant publicizing programs decided on by the staff, Minneapolis's parent information efforts were first of all efforts to educate parents to the philosophy of alternatives and help them understand the different models that might be implemented in their schools, so that they might participate in the planning process.

While specific strategies for disseminating information about alternatives varied from area to area in Minneapolis, most made use of numerous meetings, workshops and open houses, special printed materials, and articles on alternatives included in regular school bulletins and area office newsletters (mailed regularly to all area

residents). Alternatives have also received considerable coverage in Minneapolis's two daily newspapers as well as in local community papers.

In Eugene and Cincinnati, the two districts in our sample that did not receive any external funds to support development of alternatives, the public information programs reflect the nature of the districts' overall commitment to alternatives. In Eugene, expenditures on providing information have been low, reflecting the small size and limited budget of the alternatives effort. In Cincinnati, the effort to inform the community about alternatives has been a sales campaign to attract students of both races into the optional programs.

In Eugene, when alternatives were initiated, the district's public information office coordinated a public relations campaign to solicit proposals for alternatives and then to publicize the approved programs. Since then, responsibility for information dissemination on alternatives has rested with the Special Projects Office. Within the constraints of a tight budget (\$1,735 for information dissemination on alternatives in the 1976-77 school year), this office has distributed flyers to all elementary and secondary parents describing the alternative schools, and has also provided an eye-catching information packet about alternatives to all secondary students. Individual programs have also circulated mimeographed descriptions in their own neighborhoods and to other parents who request them. The local newspaper generally carries stories on the alternative schools each fall and spring, and the special projects office has a slide-tape presentation on alternatives available for presentation to interested audiences. Despite these efforts, some critics in the district claim that some Eugene parents are still unaware of the existence of alternatives and that the district should invest more in informing parents about educational options.

In Cincinnati, public information has been regarded by the district as a very high priority. A variety of media have been used to publicize the alternatives. In the spring of each of the last

several years, a booklet briefly describing all the alternatives and including an application form has been distributed to all students and has also appeared as a special supplement in the Cincinnati Post. Some programs have also produced their own individual brochures. The former superintendent had a weekly television show concerning school issues and sometimes devoted segments of the show to specific alternative programs. While this program has been discontinued under the present superintendent, the district still makes use of public service announcements on radio and television to advertise the availability of educational choices.

Beyond these general efforts to publicize alternatives, Cincinnati also conducts targeted recruitment efforts for specific programs. For example, one bilingual program that had insufficient applicants to fill its kindergarten sent promotional letters to the parents of all incoming kindergarten students and to private nursery schools. Most of the responsibility for such recruiting--including holding interviews with prospective students and parents--is assumed by the program coordinators. Principals are also called upon to assist in these efforts.

In sum, efforts to inform parents about available educational choices differed considerably among our sample districts. Alum Rock's efforts in this area were complicated by the large number of programs offered, and beset by conflicts between the central voucher staff and school administrators. In Minneapolis, the small number of alternative models facilitated efforts to inform consumers; both printed media (newsletters and brochures) and meetings have been used for this purpose. Cincinnati has publicized its educational alternatives through a variety of media and has engaged administrators and teachers in targeted recruitment efforts for specific programs. Eugene, the smallest of the alternatives systems we studied, has had a less intense program to inform the public about the availability of educational options.

Establishing Procedures for Parental Participation in Governance

Many nonpublic alternative or "free" schools have been founded on the premise of lay participation in running school affairs (Graubard, 1972). Similarly, the public school alternatives movement has been concerned with community involvement in school decision-making. The notion is that school governance should no longer be the exclusive province of education professionals. If the education system is to become more responsive to its clients, it is argued, the consumers of educational services--students and their parents--should have a greater say in deciding the full range of issues that affect the educational program. While community participation in governance is by no means the unique province of alternative schools--the idea has probably received its greatest boost through the mandated parent advisory councils in federally funded ESEA Title I programs--alternative schools have often led their districts in experimenting with alternative patterns of governance. Of the four districts we studied, only Cincinnati did not include increased parent participation in school governance as part of its alternatives agenda. The other three districts did so to varying degrees and with varying results.

Alum Rock's transition model voucher proposal provided that: "The community will participate actively in the operation and governance of the transitional voucher demonstration. Individual schools and programs will encourage parental participation at a meaningful level in their respective decisionmaking processes." This commitment to community participation was in keeping with district moves prior to the demonstration to involve parents in decisionmaking, and with OEO's customary emphasis on community involvement in poverty programs. Collective parent participation in governance is not, however, a crucial element of voucher theory. According to voucher theory, parental "control" of the schools should flow from their right to shop for the school(s) of their choice. Collective rights to influence a school's decisions--through a voting or advisory process--might be considered even less crucial to parents in a

voucher program than in one where they have no choice about which schools their children will attend.

Nonetheless, during the course of the Alum Rock demonstration a variety of mechanisms were established to allow for community participation, in keeping with the provisions of the district's proposal. At the demonstration level, the Education Voucher Advisory Committee (EVAC) was created to advise the superintendent and board on matters concerning the demonstration. Its original membership consisted of one parent and one teacher representative from each voucher school; in most cases, the representatives were appointed by the school principal. In the first year of the demonstration, for a variety of reasons, EVAC proved to be largely ineffectual in resolving voucher-related issues. It met only once a month, and its members' grasp of the often technical issues of the demonstration was limited. The voucher principals, a highly cohesive and influential group in determining demonstration policy, had persuaded the voucher project director (who presided over EVAC meetings for the first year) not to "stimulate" EVAC activity: They regarded EVAC as a threat to decentralization of authority in the district, and were dubious about entrusting school policy decisions to a group half composed of parents. EVAC was not included in much of the first year's debate that led to crucial compromises on such issues as parent counseling and evaluation.

Beginning with the second year of the demonstration, EVAC's teacher and parent representatives were elected by school staffs and parents, respectively. An attempt was made to upgrade EVAC's role in the demonstration by giving it authority over the allocation of additional funds for temporary instructional space. EVAC spent much of its time in year two mired in cumbersome debate, trying to decide when mini-schools were eligible for funds to lease portable classrooms. This complicated mechanism for acquiring extra facilities helped to deter mini-schools from seeking to expand. At the end of year two, the demonstration rules were changed to allow schools to limit their enrollments on the basis of building capacity, so the issue of allocating additional funds for space became largely moot.

As the demonstration progressed, EVAC was called upon from time to time to study and make recommendations on various issues. Its sophistication about the issues and its ability to reach decisions increased somewhat over the course of the demonstration, but it never became an important influence on district decisionmaking. For the last several years of the demonstration, there were fewer distinctions made in district planning and decisionmaking between voucher and nonvoucher schools (e.g., with respect to allocation of compensatory funds), so there were fewer exclusively "voucher" issues, the only ones EVAC was authorized to consider.

During year four, EVAC submitted a series of recommendations to the Alum Rock Board of Trustees on "The Future of Vouchers in Alum Rock," most of which were adopted by the board.¹ It is difficult to use this as a gauge of EVAC's influence, however, because most of its proposals paralleled the administration's independent set of recommendations. (The administration noted that it had considered EVAC's input when drafting its own proposals.) EVAC held its last meeting in May 1976, at which time it voted to terminate its activities. It has been replaced by a single District Advisory Committee (DAC), comprising one staff and one parent representative from each Alum Rock school, that provides input to the board of trustees on policy issues.

The 1972 Alum Rock proposal called for parental participation in decisionmaking not just at the demonstration level, but at the school and mini-school level. In the first year of the demonstration, parent advisory boards were established for all mini-schools, but in most cases they played virtually no role in making decisions. The following year the district required all schools, both voucher and nonvoucher, to create school-wide advisory boards of parents and staff. By the end of the third year, only about half of the mini-school parent advisory boards were still functioning, and voucher

¹The phase-out of the Alum Rock voucher demonstration will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

schools were officially given the option of retaining only the school-wide advisory boards. Despite the district mandate that schools create these boards, their implementation has largely been left to the discretion of the individual school, with principals having an important say in determining their role. Consequently, their activity and effectiveness has varied greatly from building to building, though some schools' advisory boards have been involved with curriculum and budget decisions and have assisted in writing funding proposals. It does not appear that, as a group, advisory boards have been any more influential at voucher schools than they have at nonvoucher schools.¹

The failure of the Alum Rock demonstration to generate more significant parent participation in school governance was a continuing source of disappointment to the federal officials overseeing the demonstration. Some had anticipated that parents would join together to translate the individual economic power of vouchers into collective political power. For the most part, Alum Rock parents did not push for such power. Their lack of greater assertiveness seems less a reflection of low interest in their children's education than of their own life circumstances. Many of Alum Rock's low-income parents do not have the time, education, and organizational experience to feel that they can contribute much to the process of school governance, and also appear to believe that educational decisions should largely be left to the authority of the professionals.

In contrast, Southeast Alternatives was initiated in an area of Minneapolis where the average economic and educational level is relatively high. Parents played a major role in developing the initial alternatives concepts and in writing the grant proposal. From the outset of SEA, part of its program of "comprehensive change" was the testing of new modes of decentralized governance. Alternatives were expected to involve the local school community--parents, students, teachers, and administrators--in decisions about planning, implementation, and evaluation. The precise outlines of new governance

¹Voucher and nonvoucher teachers report approximately the same levels of parent influence in school decisionmaking (Alum Rock Teacher Survey, Spring 1975).

procedures proved to be one of the most controversial aspects of the experiment, and one of the few major areas of contention between SEA officials and top district management. But while the changes achieved in SEA may have fallen considerably short of the visions of the strongest advocates of community participation in governance, they did represent a significant change as compared to prior practice in Minneapolis and probably as compared to most other public school districts.

Toward the end of SEA's first year, a Southeast Community Education Council (or Southeast Council) was constituted; its formal function was to advise the SEA director. (As discussed above, the SEA director had already been given significantly increased authority over the project when it was decided that SEA principals would report to him, and that project resources would flow to the SEA office rather than directly to individual schools.) Southeast Council membership consisted of parents and staff from each of the five SEA schools, as well as delegates from the local Park Board, the chief community planning group in Southeast, and the high school policy board (made up in turn of district and university representatives). From its inception, Southeast Council played a responsible role in making project decisions, largely because of the exceptionally strong commitment of the project director to community governance. Under his guidance, the council actively participated in hiring new SEA staff, in allocating both local and federal funds, in developing the proposal for a Teacher Center and convincing federal officials to approve it, and in the extensive planning and proposal-writing efforts for the second phase of the project (1973-76).

Despite the fact that Southeast Council's advisory status was being interpreted to give it substantive influence in running the project, the SEA director, some others in SEA, and officials in the federal Experimental Schools office at USOE were dissatisfied with the extent of the changes in governance that had taken place. They had in mind even greater autonomy for the Southeast project, and envisioned Southeast Council operating more like a decentralized school board. The federal contract monitor met with Superintendent

Davis in the second year of the project to press for greater concessions in the area of decentralized governance, but met with little success. Superintendent Davis felt strongly that he and the Minneapolis School Board had to retain ultimate responsibility for the schools in Southeast.

Nonetheless, Southeast Council continued to enjoy considerable influence in its advisory capacity. When, in year three, the superintendent announced the creation of three decentralized administrative areas for the district, he set a target for SEA to join one of these areas the following year. Southeast Council developed a position paper asserting that SEA should be allowed an additional year of administrative autonomy before the merger. Their recommendation was accepted by the superintendent's cabinet. The following year, Southeast Council was asked to recommend to the superintendent which area Southeast Alternatives should be merged with. The council held public meetings at which it interviewed each of the area superintendents, querying them about matters of philosophy and policy that were of special concern to SEA. It then asked that SEA be merged with the West area, the region perhaps most philosophically akin to Southeast and seemingly the most likely to be receptive to SEA ideas. While Superintendent Davis has commented that he, personally, might have chosen to incorporate SEA in one of the other two areas, more in need of its potential catalytic effect, he abided by Southeast Council's recommendation.

In the last year of SEA, Southeast Council was merged with the Southeast Management Team, consisting of the five school principals and managers of the project's various K-12 services, to form a single decisionmaking body. The problems of ironing out roles and group dynamics in the expanded council were considerable. The merger took place at the same time that SEA was trying to cope with a variety of problems associated with the merger with West area, district-wide budget cuts, and changes in district and area administration. Nonetheless, Southeast Council continues to function, and many of its members have become influential in West area school affairs. In

fact, the West area parent advisory group elected the chairperson of Southeast Council to lead their group--a significant affirmation by the entire West area of the SEA style of shared educational decision-making.

At the school level, there was considerable variation in parent involvement in decisionmaking among SEA's schools. Mechanisms for parent participation ranged from an active, but essentially traditional, PTA at the Contemporary School to an influential advisory council at the Open School, to a student-parent-staff governing board at the Free School.¹ In governance, as in other matters, SEA schools were allowed to develop strategies responsive to their differing constituencies; alternative patterns of parent involvement in school decisionmaking paralleled alternative educational styles.

Outside of SEA, parents have been involved in varying degrees in planning alternatives throughout Minneapolis. All Minneapolis schools are required to have parent advisory boards, and, as in SEA, the roles these boards play vary from school to school. As in Southeast, parents tend to be more actively involved in making decisions at open and continuous progress schools than at contemporary schools.²

Area-level parent advisory boards in each administrative area are consulted on a wide variety of policy issues. The recently

¹The Open School's Advisory Council evolved over the course of the project; in year three it consisted of elected parent representatives and five staff members elected at-large by the parents. It met bi-weekly and coordinated the work of several dozen committees dealing with such issues as hiring of new staff, budgeting, enrollments and long-term planning, evaluation, public relations, and community resources. Parents played a major ongoing role in shaping the distinctive model of open education that was developed at the school.

²In the 1977 Rand Teacher Survey, teachers in all three types of programs reported that, since alternatives began in the district, "parent influence over school or program decisions" has increased. Open School teachers were the most likely to give this response (85 percent), followed by continuous progress teachers (78 percent), and contemporary teachers (50 percent).

reconstituted district alternatives task force is involved in planning for the long-range implementation of educational options in the district, with particular emphasis on developing additional choices at the secondary level.¹ Despite these various advisory efforts, however, the level of community influence on governance in the rest of the district has not reached the same level as that achieved by Southeast Council.

In Eugene, the school board's policy on alternatives states that one of the areas in which alternatives may differ from other schools is in the "groups involved in making major administrative decisions and setting school policies." Several Eugene alternatives proposed governance models that placed heavy emphasis on community involvement. The Eastside Alternative School proposal called for an influential citizen's advisory council, made up of parents and other community members, and a steering committee, consisting of three paid staff members and three community members. The steering committee would decide the school's budget; screen, interview, and hire staff for the school; and "perform many of the functions we normally associate with a building principal." The Traditional Alternative School proposal, submitted several years later, also included provisions for a steering committee whose domains of influence paralleled those of Eastside's (hiring, budget, and evaluation). An early draft of this proposal said that its steering committee, like Eastside's, would "make decisions" on these issues. Because of misgivings on the part of some school board members, however, the language was changed to say that the committee would "have input" in these areas. The board's concerns stemmed partly from the difficulties encountered in implementing the governance model at Eastside.

Eastside's early experiences with participatory decisionmaking are not atypical of those of many alternative schools that start with good intentions but with a vague governance model and no agreed-upon

¹There is also an Area Alternatives Task Force in the district's West area, though not in the district's other two administrative areas.

decisionmaking procedures. A former member of Eastside's steering committee has stated that, for the first year, it operated "like a debating team, with endless unproductive discussions. They would react to problems but would not initiate constructive problem-solving activities. Whatever problem someone would bring up at the beginning of the session was the subject for debate for the rest of the evening."

The Eastside Steering Committee decisionmaking processes improved noticeably during the school's second year, until it was faced with a crisis over an especially difficult staffing decision. Some members of the Eastside community felt very strongly that it was crucial for the school to settle this problem within its established governance procedures. They did not want district officials to have to intervene, thereby setting a precedent that might compromise alternatives' future freedom to run their own affairs. Others, however, actually implored district administrators to step in, to prevent the bitter conflict that was developing from destroying the school. There was feeling expressed by people on both sides of the dispute that, if the steering committee decision went against their position, they would appeal the decision directly to the superintendent. Thus, many of the Eastside participants had not themselves fully accepted the legitimacy of their new governance model, and, when a crisis arose, wanted to revert to traditional means of resolving conflicts. Ultimately, the superintendent did make the final decision in this case, after satisfying himself that no solution was about to come from within the school itself.

The Eugene School Board and administration seem to have been more willing than many to relinquish some of their authority to a local school community. In practice, however, as the Eastside case shows, developing new governance structures is a long and painstaking process. One commonly reported problem is that after the initial enthusiasm of starting a new school has worn off, apathy is likely to set in and participation to sag, until a crisis occurs. Many alternative schools, both private and public, have learned through

experience that involving a school community in shared decisionmaking is an extremely challenging process, often beset with much frustration and conflict.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, no change in the pattern of school governance was intended by Cincinnati's alternatives. Some Cincinnati programs have generated more parent involvement than usual, but this has generally taken the form of traditional support functions, such as fund-raising, or political activity, such as lobbying the school board on behalf of their program. There is also a loosely knit parent group composed of representatives from various programs, that attempts to influence the board on behalf of alternatives and has occasionally gone to the press when displeased by board actions. Several board members expressed some impatience with the vocal alternative school parent groups who "are too concerned with the small picture rather than all 67,000 kids" and "raise issues that go beyond what the Board can provide." The Cincinnati School Board has created a citizens' task force to make recommendations on long-range planning for educational alternatives. Some of this group's members have expressed dissatisfaction at not being given a more active role in making important current decisions about alternatives, charging that the long-range planning assignment may have been the board's way of "keeping the community off its back." This committee has only recently completed its report, so it remains to be seen what influence its recommendations will have on future board decisions.

Thus, in three of our four districts, increased parental participation in school governance was one stated goal of the alternatives effort, a goal that proved difficult to put into practice. In Alum Rock, parents did not exert an important influence on decisionmaking for the voucher demonstration as a whole, and did so at the mini-school and school level in only a few cases. In Eugene, the district has allowed parents to play a major role in the governance of several programs, but there have been problems in developing viable procedures for making decisions, especially in conflict situations. In Southeast Alternatives in Minneapolis, a parent-staff-community council was

given substantial responsibility for project decisionmaking. Parents have also been involved in making decisions about alternatives elsewhere in the district, but generally not to as great a degree as in Southeast.

District Support for Alternatives During Implementation

So far we have examined six major management issues that districts are likely to encounter in the course of implementing alternatives, and we have seen how each of the districts in our study has dealt with these issues. This section reviews each district's overall role in the implementation process, focusing on district-level support for alternative programs.

Alum Rock

When Alum Rock embarked on the voucher demonstration, it agreed to try to implement an abstract design for reorganizing the delivery of educational services in a public school district. Creation of diverse program offerings was just one part of a complex plan that required a redistribution of decisionmaking authority in the district, and development of new procedures in budgeting, pupil assignment and attendance accounting, evaluation, and public information. The way in which Alum Rock managed the development of alternatives was dictated to a considerable degree by the very nature of the voucher plan.

The central concept underlying vouchers is competition among independent educational suppliers. In Alum Rock's public-schools-only version of vouchers, the educational suppliers could not be totally independent, but substantial decentralization of decision-making was supposed to approximate this condition. Thus, under the mini-school organization, teachers acquired considerable additional authority over curriculum and resource use. District management exercised no central control or guidance in deciding what alternative programs would be offered, leaving these choices to the discretion

of teachers and principals. As we have seen, a very large number of programs resulted, many of which promised only minor variations on existing curriculum and methods.

Similarly, the district did not assume responsibility for training teachers in new educational techniques or approaches. The only training funds expended at the district level were used for organization development efforts with school staffs and groups of administrators. These sessions were designed to mobilize participants' support for the change process, and to improve their management and group problem-solving skills. They did not, however, relate to the specific educational changes teachers were supposed to be implementing in their classrooms. Funds for such in-service training and program development were allocated directly to the mini-schools, most of which used the money to compensate teachers for summer and weekend planning time. Nor were district staff active in developing curriculum for the new programs. For the first two years of the demonstration, when mini-schools had the option of purchasing the services of the district's curriculum coordinators, demand for their services was insufficient to cover their salaries.

The decentralization implicit in voucher theory helps to explain the low level of involvement by district management in implementing educational changes in Alum Rock's mini-schools, and the very complexity of the voucher model also may have contributed to this situation. Other aspects of the voucher plan besides classroom educational changes--developing new procedures for budgeting, personnel assignment, student admissions, attendance accounting, transportation, evaluation, and public information--presented difficult implementation problems, both technical and political, that tended to absorb the time and energies of central administrators. This myriad of organizational reforms strained the system's capacity for managing change and reduced the amount of attention the district could devote to providing leadership and support for educational innovations.

To a significant degree, many voucher school principals also became immersed in the politics and mechanics of the demonstration-at-large, which diverted them from the programmatic changes going on at their schools. The principal's role as the educational leader at the school level also became unclear with the creation of multiple mini-schools in a building, each of which claimed substantial autonomy in curriculum. Principals dealt with these new ambiguities in different ways. Some principals told us that they interceded to help "straighten out" programs that they felt were being poorly implemented; others reported feeling that they no longer had the authority or power to do so. They therefore reluctantly allowed what they considered to be poor educational practices to continue.¹

Unlike Southeast Alternatives in Minneapolis, where the federally funded project director and staff coordinated staff training and program development efforts, Alum Rock's voucher project director and his staff had no responsibilities to assist in setting up the new educational programs. The central voucher staff had no authority over the schools. Their functions related to the consumer choice aspects of the demonstration: information collection and dissemination, parent counseling, internal evaluation, and student enrollment procedures. The voucher staff were seen by themselves and others as the protectors of consumer interests in the demonstration, and their relationship with the schools, and in particular with the voucher principals, was for the most part adversary rather than cooperative, especially during the crucial first two years of the demonstration. While voucher theory does imply a tension between the interests of educational producers and consumers--assuming schools will be responsive only when consumers can take their business elsewhere--the conflicts between central voucher staff and school personnel in Alum Rock were probably exacerbated by the fact that the former were all outsiders to the district.

¹See Thomas (1978), a companion volume in this series, for an analysis of how the principal's role in Alum Rock was affected by the voucher demonstration.

One example of how this tension affected the development of alternatives may be seen by contrasting the roles played by internal evaluation in the voucher demonstration and in Southeast Alternatives in Minneapolis, both of which received federal funds to support these services. As noted in our earlier discussion about providing information to parents, Alum Rock's internal evaluators saw it as their job to develop and distribute *summative evaluations* to help parents make better program choices, a position that placed them in continual conflict with the voucher schools. In contrast, SEA's internal evaluation staff concentrated on *formative evaluations* to assist decisionmakers at the project level and in individual schools. Several SEA schools used full-time resident evaluators to gather information that would help staff improve their programs, such as detailed descriptions of how students interact with different learning environments. In other SEA schools, internal evaluators helped teachers to implement individualized achievement monitoring systems. In Alum Rock, during the first year of the demonstration, the internal evaluation staff did offer to assist mini-schools in carrying out their own evaluations. But except in a few cases where mini-schools asked the voucher staff to conduct parent surveys for them, the internal evaluators never really became involved in doing formative evaluations of programs. The level of trust required for such a relationship simply did not exist.

Thus, in general, Alum Rock teachers who attempted educational innovations as part of the voucher demonstration did so pretty much on their own, with little outside support from the district. While they were busy implementing new ideas in the classroom, they also had to learn to deal with the organizational changes involved in running mini-schools. Teachers had to assume new administrative responsibilities--dealing with budgets, purchase orders, staffing decisions, and parent advisory councils--at the same time that they were trying out new approaches to teaching. Many teachers liked having greater influence over all aspects of the educational program but also reported feeling burdened by a greatly increased workload.

Shifting student enrollments, inadequate space for expanding programs, and frequent changes in the rules of the demonstration did not provide teachers with a very stable or comfortable environment for ironing out the educational problems in their new programs.

Alum Rock represented a radically decentralized approach to creating alternatives. Ironically, under the transition voucher plan, mini-schools remained constrained by district commitments and policies in certain ways that prevented true autonomy and greater diversity. They could not choose the administrators in their buildings; they could not set teacher salaries; they had limited influence over staff hiring; and they had to abide by state guidelines on student/teacher ratios. However, while remaining within the organizational framework of a public school district, they did not receive one of the normal countervailing benefits, namely, guidance and support from district management in designing and conducting their new educational programs.

Cincinnati

In analyzing the role of the district in relation to its alternatives in Cincinnati, it is necessary to distinguish between the establishment of the program and their subsequent implementation. As we have seen, the central office was largely responsible for decisions about program types and locations. Once programs were established, however, the role of the central administration in actual implementation was substantially reduced. The district's *Evaluation of Alternative and Magnet Programs 1975-76* (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1976b, p. 4) alludes to the pros and cons of what it refers to as Cincinnati's "decentralized philosophy" of implementation:

This organizational structure has effectively eliminated much of the "red tape" which could have stifled the responsiveness and imagination of the new alternative programs. Under this decentralized system, decisions regarding the operation of each program were, insofar as possible, left to those who were closest to the students and parents. Only very broad policy stipulations, like the 70-30 percent minimum racial balance standard, were imposed from the central administration.

This *laissez faire* administrative system was not without its drawbacks, however. It was difficult to accumulate data for overall assessment; it was difficult to coordinate bus schedules; it was sometimes very difficult to maintain accurate student rosters at the central office level.

This statement implies that the district's decentralized approach to implementation resulted in its being somewhat divorced from what was going on in the alternative schools. Theoretically, it should be possible for operational decisions to be left to the people closest to students and parents without programs becoming isolated from the central office. District management could play a role in guiding, coordinating, and supporting implementation while allowing responsibility for day-to-day decisions to remain at the local level. It was our impression, in fact, that some Cincinnati programs did enjoy such an association with the central office, while others did not.

As noted in our discussion of initiation and program design, each of Cincinnati's alternatives, at the time of its inception, was assigned to a high-level central administrator--usually an area director--for overall supervision of start-up and implementation. The support a program received from the central office during implementation depended considerably on the commitment and bureaucratic skills of the administrator. People in the system--both at the schools and in the central office--seemed to be in general agreement about which administrators "stayed on top of" what was happening in their programs and could command district resources--both political and material--to assist in implementation. A staff member of one program, which had been assigned to two different central administrators in its lifetime, told how one administrator had "visited the program and was always available to help out with problems," while the other one "didn't even read the materials we sent in and never made any contact." Such isolation from the central office was an especially serious problem in the few programs where there were implementation difficulties that the local staff could not solve by

themselves. One principal, who felt that the alternative at his school was not working well, said he felt "completely cut off" from the people at the central office and so had not discussed these problems with them.

One factor that seems to have affected the ability of Cincinnati's central administrators to oversee program implementation has been the pressure for rapid expansion of the alternatives system. The substantial demands of starting up new programs--design, location, staffing, materials, and student recruitment--have fallen largely on central administrators. As the number of alternative programs in Cincinnati has expanded from two to fourteen (at thirty-six sites) in the last four years, the urgencies of start-up have often diverted the attention of the central office from the continuing implementation problems of programs already in operation.

For about half of its fourteen alternative programs, Cincinnati has provided special continuing support in the form of program coordinators, who assume overall responsibility for program leadership and curriculum development and play a major role in staff selection and student recruitment. Most of these people were recruited from outside the system because of their special expertise in particular subjects or methods, and several have clearly been the dominant forces in shaping their programs.

In the remaining Cincinnati alternatives however, there is no assigned coordinator, and program leadership rests with the building principal and program teachers. While these tend to be the programs with less clearly distinct program themes, such as the Elementary College Preparatory and Junior High College Readiness programs, some teachers have been dissatisfied with the lack of overall planning, coordination, and curriculum development. A recent teachers' union policy statement on alternatives included the following criticism: "Many teachers in alternative schools have not been provided with firm objectives and curricula in advance and are expected to write curricula while simultaneously performing their daily teaching tasks" (Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, 1977, p. 1). Teachers in a few

programs (some with coordinators and some without) have been compensated for extra time devoted to planning and program development, but teachers in most programs have not.

The overall strategies Cincinnati has used in its alternatives effort--centralized choice of programs, largely decentralized implementation, emphasis on content-oriented programs involving relatively little change in teacher behavior, and reliance on specialized staff--have expedited the creation of a large number of new programs. The quality of these programs seems to have depended substantially on the particular staff involved; where there have been problems, there has not been a systematic mechanism for providing additional district support or otherwise correcting the situation. The district administration now seems aware of the need to integrate the alternative programs more effectively into the system. Consequently, efforts are now under way to formulate uniform policies for dealing with the alternatives and to improve the administrative structure for managing them. The next chapter, which discusses the process of institutionalization, examines these efforts.

Eugene

District support for alternatives during implementation in Eugene has been uneven. The personal identification of the superintendent with the alternatives has provided them with an important source of moral and practical support. He has frequently become personally involved in resolving implementation questions, and we sensed that some district administrators support (at least outwardly) alternatives more than they otherwise might, because the superintendent established them as a district priority. The former special projects assistant, who had direct access to the superintendent, served an important role as administrative liaison and advocate for the alternative programs. (Her successor is less actively involved with alternatives.)

With the superintendent's support, alternatives were granted a degree of flexibility in certain matters, such as conversion of certificated staff positions to paraprofessional slots, that helped them

pursue their distinct styles. At the same time, some alternatives' staff we spoke with felt they were unnecessarily constrained by bureaucratic rigidity in other areas, such as budgeting. They were distressed, for example, by rules that prevented their reallocating monies among budget categories to better reflect their program priorities--i.e., buying fewer textbooks and more field trips. They complained about the amount of time and energy consumed by "hassling" with district personnel and trying to "beat the system." Overall, however, in our opinion, the system seemed quite willing to accommodate their special needs.

The major obstacle that has prevented more active district support for program implementation in Eugene is the superintendent's commitment that alternatives will cost no more to operate than regular programs. As we have seen, this means that the district can provide only very limited resources for staff development and planning. The absence of greater opportunities for training is particularly significant, because almost all of Eugene's programs are attempting basic changes in classroom organization and style.

To some extent, the informal network that has grown up among alternative programs in the district has helped provide mutual support and learning among the staff. Teachers in two of the newer programs spoke of "learning from the experiences and mistakes" of the initial alternatives. For part of the first year of implementation, the special projects assistant attempted to formalize this network, by organizing regular meetings of alternative teachers to discuss their common problems and possible solutions. After a while these meetings were discontinued, however, largely because the people involved were too immersed in the day-to-day meetings and crises of their own programs to want to commit the additional time required. Nonetheless, informal communication and social contact among this group remains high.¹

¹People in Eugene refer jokingly to the "incestuousness" of the alternatives movement. We know of at least three couples in which each spouse teaches in a different alternative, and several alternative teachers are active as parents in other alternative programs.

Unlike Minneapolis, Eugene has provided no special training for principals of schools that house alternatives. It was our impression however, that most of Eugene's alternatives enjoyed considerable support from their principals. In several cases, precursors of the alternative programs had operated with the principal's support before alternatives became official district policy. In several other cases, however, the support of principals for the alternative programs in their buildings appears to be the result of judicious assignment of principals by the district. Most of the alternative principals assisted their programs by relieving them of management chores and running interference with district personnel. In a few cases, principals were sufficiently versed in the alternative philosophy to be able to provide guidance in program development, but these were exceptions.

Eugene provides an example of a district where, with high community and staff commitment, alternatives were implemented with minimal district expenditures. Eugene's alternatives system is small enough that it has not required major changes in overall district operations. The district has generally handled the special problems of alternatives on a case-by-case basis without establishing formal new policies that distinguish alternatives from other programs. From a short-term political perspective, this strategy probably serves to reduce the visibility of alternatives, and potential opposition to them. In the next chapter, we will consider the long-term prospects of the alternatives for survival in the Eugene system.

Minneapolis

In Minneapolis, in marked contrast to Eugene, the creation of elementary alternatives has been a program for system-wide reform. The district's overall strategy has been one of providing leadership and coordination, while encouraging local responsibility for planning and implementing change. One principal described the central office's approach to managing change this way: "They reward those schools who move in the direction they want them to go with dollars and recognition."

Once the Minneapolis School Board adopted the goal of providing educational choice, the district administration provided clear signals to everyone in the system that alternatives were a high priority. The superintendent and other top administrators frequently gave speeches on the subject. Alternatives were visibly linked to district plans for reaching other major goals: desegregation/integration, decentralization, and replacement of old buildings. A timetable was established with requirements for periodic reporting about progress toward the goal.

As we have seen, Minneapolis's initial involvement with alternatives was supported by external funds, which the district used to experiment with "comprehensive change" in one small section of the city. The SEA pilot project served a number of functions for the broader change efforts the district was later to undertake.¹ First, it provided local evidence that alternatives could work. Second, it helped to stimulate demand for alternatives from parents in other parts of the district. Third, it became a working model for the rest of the system. SEA staff and parents provided speakers for other schools that wanted to learn more about alternatives. The Information Sharing Project provided administrators, staff, and parents from each of the three administrative areas with a week's visit in SEA. Several staff reassignments were made to capitalize on the experience of SEA. For example, the first principal of the SEA Open School was made a special assistant to an area superintendent, with responsibility for coordinating that area's alternative planning.

¹Note that SEA had been in operation for nearly two years when Minneapolis first began planning implementation of alternatives in some other schools. In contrast, Alum Rock made the decision to more than double the number of voucher schools for year two when the demonstration had been under way for only about 6 months, and a great many implementation problems remained unresolved. By doing so, the district was fulfilling the terms of its first year agreement with OEO. However, several district administrators have commented that it might have been wiser to delay expansion of the demonstration until the original schools had had more experience with mini-schools, and could thereby have served as models to new voucher schools, and until district management had had more time to resolve technical problems associated with the voucher system.

There were also opportunities for teachers from other parts of the district to serve internships in SEA schools.

One of the most important contributions of Southeast Alternatives was the development of the three prototype models of elementary education on which the rest of Minneapolis's alternatives have been based. Without mandating that SEA's programs be replicated by other schools, the district used SEA's example to help establish an informal consensus about what "alternatives" means in Minneapolis. By thus limiting the types of choices to be offered, the district simplified the task of parent education and helped create a sense of common purpose throughout the system.

At the same time, the district allowed for local responsiveness and variability by organizing the actual planning of alternatives on a decentralized basis. The three administrative areas, and, in turn, school clusters within areas, were charged with deciding what new programs would be like. The district helped by establishing certain common expectations about the planning process, especially the requirement that teachers and parents should actively participate in designing the alternatives.

Having chosen types of alternatives that required substantial changes in school organization and teaching style, Minneapolis invested heavily in staff development. Training in the philosophies and practicalities of alternatives was provided not only for teachers, but for principals and district administrators, and in many cases for paraprofessional staff and parents.

At the central office, the district helped provide support for the development of alternatives by adapting many of its procedures to meet the needs of diverse programs. For example, insofar as was possible within the framework of the district's contract with teachers, school administrators were given discretion to select the staff members who were most compatible with their programs. The guidance and assessment department adapted its grade-based testing schedule to accommodate upgraded programs. The research and evaluation department provided assistance with formative evaluation for a number of programs.

Through central guidance and support and decentralized planning, Minneapolis has succeeded in stimulating significant change in many of its elementary schools. In the next chapter, we will examine the prospects for sustaining and expanding the changes that have been accomplished so far.

V. STATUS OF ALTERNATIVES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

We have examined the initiation and implementation of alternatives in four districts. We now turn to an assessment of the changes accomplished by the alternatives and the prospects for sustaining these changes in the future.

As discussed in Chapter I, this study does not address the "outcomes" of alternatives in terms of student cognitive and affective development or consumer satisfaction. To identify effective strategies and potential problems for implementing alternatives, we have focused on the process of implementation, on the premise that student outcomes and parent satisfaction ultimately depend on how effectively alternatives are implemented. This chapter presents our findings on the effectiveness of implementation in terms of the program diversity actually achieved¹ and the changes that have been effected in district operations to support diversity and choice.

Where a district succeeds in implementing diverse alternatives, we must still ask about the potential stability of its alternatives system: Will the changes brought about during implementation persist or will they fade with time? Research on a variety of innovative projects in education has demonstrated that even successfully implemented innovations often disappear unless the school district takes

¹Our assessments of program distinctiveness are based on different sources of data for our four districts. The most complete evidence on program diversity exists for Alum Rock, where Rand performed systematic observation during 1975-76 in a sample of fifty-six voucher classrooms and thirty-six nonvoucher classrooms. For Eugene and Minneapolis, our information on education practices comes primarily from descriptions supplied by teachers on our teacher survey and our informal observation in programs. In Cincinnati, where we were unable to field a teacher survey, we were forced to rely more heavily on impressions formed during our visits. (We visited all elementary programs in Eugene, eighteen programs in Minneapolis, and fifteen programs in Cincinnati.) In all four districts, our assessments of program distinctiveness are also based in part on our interviews with district and program staff and parents.

deliberate measures to incorporate them into regular district operations (The Ford Foundation, 1972; Berman and McLaughlin, 1977b).

The process of incorporating new practices into regular district operations may be called *institutionalization*. If alternative programs are successfully institutionalized, the changes introduced during implementation will be sustained and have a lasting impact on the district. As our analysis of the implementation process has demonstrated, the establishment of alternatives requires both educational changes at the program level and, depending on the scope of the system, a greater or lesser degree of change in overall district operations. Consequently, our analysis of institutionalizing alternatives will look at both district- and program-level changes.

Although this chapter will be concerned with the prospects for sustaining changes in alternative schools and related district operations, a comprehensive innovation such as alternatives may have other impacts on the school system besides those directly intended by the project. Where relevant, therefore, we will also note spill-over effects of these four alternatives systems.

Alum Rock

A visitor to the Alum Rock School District in the spring of 1977 could have little doubt that the federally funded voucher demonstration was dead. Though the district was still scheduled to receive some federal funds for this official fifth and final year of the demonstration, most people in the district had a clear sense that the demonstration had been over for quite some time. Most mini-schools had been disbanded. Several Alum Rock schools--some that had participated in the voucher demonstration and some that had not--were still offering alternative programs, but almost no one seemed to know much about them. People in the district differed in their perceptions of the residual effects of the voucher experience, but there was virtual consensus that many of the changes envisioned as part of a voucher system had not "taken" in the district and that alternatives per se had not been institutionalized.

As is often the case with this final phase of the innovative process, institutionalization in Alum Rock has been marked by the selective retention of some elements of the innovation attempted and the rejection of others. At the end of the fourth year of the demonstration, the administration and the parent-teacher Education Voucher Advisory Committee made recommendations to the district Board of Trustees about phasing out vouchers in the district. The board voted to eliminate a number of key components of the then-existing voucher plan. To understand the demise of vouchers in Alum Rock, however, it is necessary to look not just at these final formal decisions about institutionalization, but also at what led up to them.

The history of the Alum Rock experiment consists of a series of compromises between an abstract design for reorganizing the delivery of educational services and the realities of a functioning public school district. As described in our discussion of initiation in Alum Rock, the transition voucher model differed in key respects from the regulated compensatory voucher model OEO had originally wanted to test: It restricted participation to public schools only and assured teachers that employment would not depend on school income from vouchers.

Further modifications to the Alum Rock transition voucher plan came in the course of implementation. The transition voucher plan called for a number of complex, basic changes in school district operations. Lacking the resources, time, expertise, and political consensus among participants to undertake all of these changes concurrently, the district attacked various voucher components in a sequential fashion. The first three years of the demonstration emphasized, respectively, the creation of mini-schools, the implementation of a new decentralized budgeting system, and the evaluation of programs and provision of information to parents. However, at no time were all of the components that would have been comprised by the voucher system in operation together. By the time the evaluation and information mechanisms that should have helped parents to choose

programs were developed, the provisions for adjusting program supply to student demand had been diminished. Mini-school incentives to expand were minimal, because the mini-school staffs did not have control over new staffing and found space limitations a problem. A brief, poorly planned attempt at satelliting (opening a branch of a popular mini-school at another building) proved unsuccessful,¹ so this procedure was abandoned. For the third year of the demonstration maximum school sizes were set, meaning that even relatively unpopular schools would be guaranteed a modest enrollment. The failure of private schools to enter the marketplace, even when this became technically possible (albeit under severely restricted conditions),² placed further restrictions on the supply side of the educational marketplace.

Despite these limitations that prevented the system from operating like a true voucher plan, Alum Rock did bring about an

¹There was friction between teachers of the host school and those of the satellite mini-school and ambiguity about who should assume administrative responsibility for the satellite--the host principal or the principal at the school where the mini-school originated.

²In late 1973, the California legislature passed Senate Bill 600, voucher-enabling legislation that authorized participation of private schools in so-called "demonstration scholarship" (voucher) programs. It stated that any decision-related to such a voucher demonstration program was a "proper subject" for inclusion in a school district's "meet and confer" process with its Certificated Employees Council (CEC). Superintendent Jefferds interpreted this language to grant the Alum Rock CEC substantial influence in establishing the ground rules for private school participation in the demonstration. The district accepted conditions proposed by the CEC which, in effect, required private schools to operate under the same conditions as public schools, in terms of salary, class sizes, fringe benefits, and teacher certification.

Only one school--operated by a group of young teachers who had moved to Alum Rock from outside the district--ever attempted to qualify for participation in the demonstration. After a complex series of legal and political obstacles were eventually overcome, the district accepted the school's application for participation and included it in the program descriptions distributed to parents for fall 1974 enrollment. However, the school received too few applicants to open for business. (For a more detailed account, see Weiler et al., 1974a, pp. 64-67.)

important organizational innovation in the early years of the demonstration, namely, decentralization of educational decisionmaking to the mini-school level. With the discretionary money from compensatory vouchers, which averaged about \$20,000 annually per mini-school for the first three years of the demonstration, mini-schools could purchase additional teachers, aides, equipment, materials, field trips, or whatever else was needed for their programs.¹ They also enjoyed virtually complete autonomy over curriculum. For the first three years of the demonstration in voucher schools, therefore, educational planning was concentrated at the mini-school rather than the school level.

While mini-school autonomy was thus substantial, it was also quite dependent on the availability of discretionary funds. In the second year of the demonstration, the district made a critical funding decision that contributed to the eventual erosion of the mini-schools structure. During that year, the district received an additional \$1 million for new state compensatory programs, and it decided to allocate these funds to whole schools rather than to mini-schools. The district had never committed itself to distribute anything other than basic voucher and federally funded compensatory vouchers to the mini-schools. Principals were anxious to control some discretionary funds for the school as a whole, and district accountants wanted to avoid the complexities of establishing separate mini-school accounts for these other compensatory funds. Mini-schools did not have the political resources to stake their claim to these funds, so the preference of the district business office and the principals prevailed. This decision meant, in effect, that the end of federal voucher funds would also mark the end of mini-school financial discretion, which in turn would compromise the future of the mini-schools.

During the third year of the voucher demonstration, 1974-75, a number of events further undermined the future of the mini-schools.

¹For analysis of how mini-schools spent their discretionary funds, see Furry (1976).

A proposed tax increase measure failed at the polls and substantial numbers of teachers had to be laid off. Decisions about which teachers would be laid off were made in accordance with contractual seniority provisions, without regard to the program needs of individual mini-schools. Also for the following year, all types of compensatory funds (including compensatory voucher monies) were merged and allocated to total schools on the basis of reading scores (the lower the scores, the more funds). State compensatory programs required school-wide planning and involved extensive paperwork, which helped push planning and budgeting decisions back to the school level. For the 1975-76 school year, all but four of fourteen voucher schools abandoned mini-school budgets and decided how to use their compensatory funds as a total school.

Thus, by the fourth year of the demonstration, the mini-school structure was beginning to erode. All but one of the mini-school programs of the previous year continued to operate, and they retained discretion over their curriculum, but a movement had begun to reinstate the school as the basic unit of organization in Alum Rock. This development was strongly supported by voucher principals, who felt they had given up too much authority to the mini-schools, and by those teachers who did not like the added administrative responsibilities, paperwork, and competition mini-schools entailed.

During year four (1975-76), Superintendent Jefferds took a year's leave of absence from the district. The deputy superintendent, serving as acting superintendent for this period, solicited input from his administrative staff, building administrators, and the parent-teacher Education Voucher Advisory Committee on the future of vouchers in the district after the end of the federal project. In January 1976, he recommended¹ to the Board of Trustees that:

1. Alternative educational models should be encouraged in the Alum Rock schools. Local schools should have the option of providing alternative education or not.

¹Summarized from Alum Rock Union Elementary School District, January 13, 1976.

2. Schools should have the option of using mini-schools (with distinct curricula, budgets, and advisory boards) as a means of achieving alternative education.
3. Open enrollment should be allowed among programs in a school and between schools, with the district providing transportation if it has sufficient funds.
4. Students should be permitted to transfer during the year if space permits, after a required conference of parent, teacher, principal, and child.
5. Program descriptions and lay-oriented evaluation materials should be made available to all parents.
6. There should be one parent advisory board at each school and one at the district level.
7. All budgeting for both basic and compensatory funds should be done on a per pupil basis.
8. A uniform skills continuum and record-keeping system should be developed and mandated from the central office for use in all schools. Decisions about curriculum, materials, and budget management should be decentralized to the school level.

The Board of Trustees approved all of these recommendations except the one pertaining to mini-schools. They voted down the mini-school proposal on the grounds that, having approved alternative education in principle, they did not have to be specific as to form. While their action did not abolish mini-schools, neither did it support them in any way. Most of the district's fifty mini-schools disbanded at the end of that school year. During the 1976-77 school year, only seven of Alum Rock's fourteen voucher schools chose to continue offering multiple programs; they were joined by two nonvoucher schools that offered a bilingual program as an alternative to their basic program. By the spring of 1977, all but two of these multiprogram schools (one voucher and one nonvoucher) had decided to merge back into total school operations.¹

¹One former voucher school returned to total school planning but decided to still offer parents their choice between two different reading programs, and to try to honor parent requests for specific teachers.

Before they were dismantled, how much educational diversity had the Alum Rock mini-schools actually offered parents and students? Rand conducted a classroom observation study during the fourth year of the demonstration, when teacher layoffs and the partial return to school-wide budgeting of discretionary funds had possibly already diminished the distinctiveness of some of the mini-school programs. However, based on the results of a pilot classroom observation study conducted the previous year, and on impressions formed during informal visits by Rand personnel to voucher schools over the course of the demonstration, it is our belief that the findings of the fourth year classroom observation study do not seriously understate the degree of diversity achieved earlier in the demonstration.

To summarize, analysis of our classroom observation data revealed little systematic diversity in classroom practice among voucher mini-schools. While the data showed variation among teaching styles and learning environments from classroom to classroom, these were not clearly associated with mini-schools. Overall, most mini-schools had not achieved consistent and distinct approaches to teaching and learning, though there were some exceptions. Even programs which were supposed to have made seemingly straightforward curriculum changes, such as increasing classroom time devoted to fine arts, did not in all cases offer more instruction in these subjects than did other programs.

There also proved to be relatively little differences in actual classroom practice between schools that had participated in the demonstration and those that had not. The only attribute that seemed clearly to distinguish voucher from nonvoucher schools was a greater availability of materials in the former. Both voucher and nonvoucher schools, however, seemed to make considerable use of learning kits and other media designed for programmed self-instruction, with teachers circulating among individual students and small groups to provide assistance. This appears to indicate a general move toward greater individualization of instruction in the district in recent years that was independent of mini-school or demonstration

boundaries, and may be partly attributable to the emphasis on innovation that accompanied the demonstration.¹

Why the voucher demonstration did not lead to more clearly identifiable and durable educational alternatives is an important question. There seems to be widespread belief in the district now--among board members, district administrators, principals, and many teachers--that there was insufficient leadership, guidance, and support for teachers suddenly thrust into a situation where they were expected to develop distinct, coherent educational alternatives. For teachers who had long operated under conditions of shortage--"where each piece of construction paper was treasured," as one administrator put it--the natural reaction to a large influx of discretionary funds was to invest in material things: books, curriculum materials, supplies, equipment, and carpeting. Many mini-schools also spent substantial amounts on classroom aides. However, there was relatively little expenditure for staff development. Mini-school in-service allowances went mostly to pay teachers for the extra time they put into planning their programs, rather than to support training activities in new teaching techniques or new methods of classroom organization.

In retrospect, many Alum Rock participants seem to feel that the district became too radically decentralized during the demonstration. As one district administrator commented: "We threw tremendous resources into teachers and building managers but didn't train them in how to use these resources. Now we are pulling back toward some centralization. Most schools like the idea of a district-wide skills curriculum. They can still choose their own alternative ways for teaching these skills. But community members and staff feel we've been floating too long without any central direction."

By and large, Alum Rock's parents seem supportive of a return to a district-wide emphasis on basic skills with greater "accountability" between levels of the system. District staff tend to agree

¹For further discussion of the methodology and findings of the Alum Rock classroom observation study, see Barker et al. (1978), Vol. V in this series.

that many parents were confused by the large variety of different programs in Alum Rock, and that the 35 percent annual transiency rate in Alum Rock made consumer education difficult. One member of the Alum Rock Board of Trustees observed: "To make a choice is one of the most complicated intellectual processes there is. Those behind the voucher demonstration were naive to think that, without a great deal of training, people in this community could choose educational programs for their children with a real sense of security. Most parents were overwhelmed by so much change taking place all at the same time."

This discussion of the end of vouchers in Alum Rock should not be taken to mean that the district has totally reverted to its pre-demonstration state. Several components of the voucher plan have been adopted system-wide. All students in the district are now able to choose which school they will attend, with free transportation provided by the district. During 1976-77, more than 20 percent of the district's students chose to attend a school other than the one to which they had been geographically assigned.¹ A booklet describing all schools is mailed to all parents each spring. Also, an evaluation booklet, comparing the district's schools in terms of test scores, student attitude measures, budget breakdowns, and staff characteristics, is made available to parents in their local school offices. While open enrollment with these information and evaluation mechanisms thus preserves elements of choice in the system, Alum Rock's schools do not reflect the type of systematic diversity that would constitute an institutionalized system of educational alternatives.

As a result of the voucher demonstration, Alum Rock has enhanced its capabilities in a number of technical aspects of district management. It has retained the per pupil budgeting and computerized attendance accounting systems developed for the demonstration.

¹This number may be somewhat misleading. Ironically, some Alum Rock students who had been assigned by the district to a school that was not the closest school to home have used open enrollment to transfer into the closest school to home.

Per pupil budgeting means that compensatory funds follow individual eligible children from school to school, which is not the practice in most school districts. Alum Rock has also developed considerable in-house expertise in evaluation, an area in which it did not have a capability before vouchers. Voucher school staffs acquired new sophistication in planning, documenting, and evaluating their educational efforts, though nonvoucher staffs have also developed these skills recently as a result of their participation in state consolidated funding programs. Some Alum Rock observers feel that the demonstration has left district administrators and teachers more willing to innovate and take risks, while others suggest just the opposite--that district staff are "burned out" and "have had it" with experimentation. Our impression is that there are numerous instances of each attitude, depending in part on personal experience with the demonstration.

Conclusion

Viewed in terms of the large federal investment of approximately \$8.5 million, the lasting impact of the voucher experience on Alum Rock may seem minimal. Vouchers were a complex and potentially threatening innovation that conflicted with the basic values, authority structure, and contractual obligations of the adopting institution. To entice Alum Rock to participate, OEO agreed to initial terms for the experiment that were ambiguous and less stringent than originally planned. This gave the district significant leeway to modify the innovation during implementation to make it more compatible with its own needs. Short of terminating the demonstration, OEO and NIE had no way to keep the implementation more faithful to their original intent. Nor did the parents in Alum Rock assert their interest in making the system more voucher-like.

Through the voucher demonstration, Alum Rock did accomplish its initial aims of bringing money into the district and decentralizing decisionmaking to the school level. It is important to remember that educational alternatives were not part of the district's

original agenda. They had not been demanded by the community or the staff, but rather were attempted as part of a comprehensive organizational change regarded as a means to other ends. Most of the district's attention was focused on other aspects of a voucher system, rather than on the slow and painstaking work of accomplishing the educational changes on which viable alternatives could be based. It is not therefore very surprising that, in the wake of the voucher demonstration, educational alternatives in Alum Rock seem largely to have disappeared.

Cincinnati

In the past five years, the Cincinnati school district has developed a varied system of educational alternatives. The district has started seventeen alternative programs, beginning with the first two in 1973, and including the three newest, which began operation in the fall of 1977.¹ All told, alternatives presently are being offered at forty-three school sites, enrolling approximately 9,000 students, up from approximately 8,000 in the 1976-77 school year. This means that about one of every seven district students is attending an alternative program.

The prospects for further expansion of Cincinnati's alternatives system is somewhat problematic. New applications for the 1977-78 year have lagged somewhat behind the previous several years: Enrollment targets had called for 4,000 new applications but only about 1,000 materialized. This may be attributable to special circumstances, such as the month-long teachers' strike during the spring that required district administrators to cover classrooms, thereby diverting them from the task of recruiting for alternatives. It may also indicate, however, that some sort of enrollment plateau has been reached, meaning that most families with the interest and willingness

¹ Several other new programs that had been announced for the fall of 1977 were canceled for lack of applications.

to send their children to racially balanced alternative programs have already done so. Whichever is the case, a number of people we spoke with in Cincinnati, including the superintendent, seem to believe that the time has come to pause, assess, and consolidate what has been accomplished so far, before deciding to launch any more new alternatives.

Until recently, the Cincinnati administration has been largely preoccupied with increasing the number of students in alternatives, and has not paid so much attention to developing its capacity to manage and support these programs. Planning for new programs has often been under considerable pressure, with decisions made on an ad hoc basis. The district has recently begun efforts to systematize and clarify its policies and procedures affecting alternatives, and to streamline the administrative structure linking the alternatives to the central office. This appears to be a beginning in the process of institutionalizing alternatives in the district.

For the past year, two groups have been at work in Cincinnati studying the problems and prospects of educational alternatives in the district. A citizens' task force, charged with long-range planning for alternatives, recently presented its report and recommendations to the board. A staff committee on alternatives, including central office and school administrators, as well as teachers, has been developing detailed sets of administrative procedures covering such topics as staffing, student applications, site selection, promoting alternatives, budget, and evaluation. One of the district's curriculum consultants has served as co-chairman of the citizens' task force and as executive secretary of the staff committee, thereby providing liaison between the two groups.

The reports and proposals of these two groups identify some of the major problems that have plagued Cincinnati's alternatives system to date: inadequate planning and curriculum development for some new programs, lack of administrative coordination at the district level, and isolation of some alternative programs from the central

office. Both groups have proposed longer timelines for start-up of new programs, to allow for early staffing, staff training, and program development. The citizens' task force calls for 6 months to a year of curriculum and materials development for any new program, with teachers playing an "integral part" in these efforts.

To facilitate district management of the alternatives system, the citizens task force proposes that a single office be established to handle all matters concerning alternatives. The staff committee has not adopted this approach but has attempted to deal with the problem of administrative coordination by delineating the responsibilities of various people in the system (coordinator of alternative schools,¹ area directors, coordinators, principals, and institutional consultants) with respect to alternatives.

The recommendations of these two groups are thoughtful, and hold the promise of a more effective alternatives system. Since both groups are advisory, however, it remains for the board and top administration to act on their recommendations. It is an open question whether the proposals will be put into effect, given budgetary constraints and the bureaucratic and political realities of the system. Our own observations lead us to believe that there is some ambivalence among members of the staff alternatives committee about the committee's role in formulating policy. Despite obvious dedication to working out a complex problem--how alternatives can best serve to advance both the educational and desegregation goals of the district--there is an undercurrent of skepticism about whether the committees will really make a difference.

Even if the recommended policies and procedures of these two groups were to be formally adopted by the district, would actual practice come to resemble these written guidelines any more than an official organization chart reflects the way a school district really operates? Formal policies and procedures, no matter how carefully devised and sensible, depend upon an organization's capacity and

¹This position was established in the spring of 1977.

commitment to carry them out. When we asked one Cincinnati administrator whether the staff committee's recommendations were likely to result in more effective management of alternatives, he expressed the hope that they would, tempered by this insight: "The problem may be that the task is so overwhelming. We are building a system within a system from scratch: facilities, staff, curricula, everything. The central office staff who are responsible for alternatives are all people with other allegiances and responsibilities in the system. Some of them are not really in favor of alternatives and so they don't follow through. In other cases, people are committed to alternatives, but they are so busy that time may prevent them from [following through on responsibilities to alternative programs]."

Cincinnati's problem of meshing an alternatives management structure with the district's regular management structure is complicated by the fact that the latter has itself undergone so many changes in recent years, with new superintendents and administrative reorganizations (a new reorganization study is presently being conducted in the district). The latest management plan for alternatives, which took effect in the spring of 1977, assigns ultimate responsibility for each alternative program to a single senior administrator; some of these are area directors while the remainder are administrators with other central office responsibilities (e.g., elementary reading coordinators). Additionally, instructional consultants are assigned to provide more immediate support to each program in curriculum development, in-service training, resources acquisition, and student recruitment. While it has yet to be seen how this plan will operate in practice, there seem to be several potential problems. In some cases--usually programs with multiple sites--area directors have been assigned responsibility for alternatives located in other directors' areas, which may create ambiguity about lines of authority. For example, a principal of a building housing an alternative and a regular program might have to report to two different area directors. Another apparent difficulty is that some programs have been assigned numerous instructional consultants, each of whom has responsibilities

to multiple programs. This arrangement could result in a fragmentation of effort thereby eroding the goal of providing strong central office support. The arrangement used for a few Cincinnati programs, in which one or two consultants have overall responsibility for only one program, may turn out to be preferable.

A major influence on the central office's ability to provide continuing support for the alternative programs is the district's financial situation. A teachers' strike in the spring of 1977 ended with a 6 percent salary increase for teachers, but a June levy election that would have provided the necessary additional revenues was defeated. Unless the levy is successfully resubmitted to the voters, the district may have to close schools for part of 1978.

In a time of such financial pressure, it is difficult for the board to justify high expenditures on alternative schools. Sensitive to criticism from regular school staffs and parents, board members voted in March 1976 to hold excess per pupil costs in alternatives to \$100 for the 1976-77 school year. This compares to a \$165 average excess instructional cost for the 1975-76 school year (excluding one-time capital improvement costs).

Expenditure figures for 1976-77 are not yet available, but some reductions have been made: class sizes have been increased in several programs, curriculum development funds have been cut back for programs already in operation, and teacher planning periods have been eliminated in one program. The reduction of curriculum development support for existing programs seems to reflect the administration's belief that these programs are well enough established to survive and, given budget constraints, should assume a lower priority than new programs. This may cause a problem, however, for those programs that were designed to add one grade level per year, since their curriculum has not yet been fully developed. In the short run, a strategy of withdrawing special support from established programs in favor of expanding the number of alternatives may serve to increase the number of students in alternatives; in the longer run, however, it may lead to enrollment losses by hurting program quality.

Perhaps the overriding uncertainty about the future of alternatives in Cincinnati, however, is the pending *Bronson* case, in which the court will decide whether the district has been guilty of past segregation and whether it has taken sufficient steps to remedy existing racial isolation. The board will use its creation of voluntarily desegregated alternatives as part of its defense in this case.¹ It is conceivable that the court could order a more extensive desegregation plan for Cincinnati, involving some mandatory provisions, while incorporating the existing alternatives and magnet schools as part of the remedy. Voluntary alternatives have been used to supplement mandatory busing in other cities such as Boston and Dallas. While it seems unlikely that the court would order the alternatives disbanded, the additional costs of widespread mandatory desegregation could further threaten the financial future of alternatives. In short, the ultimate status of alternatives in the system may be decided in part by judicial decree, rather than by the dynamics of institutionalization that we have been discussing.

In the meantime, what can be said about the educational diversity that has been created in Cincinnati as a result of alternatives? As we have seen, the distinctiveness of several Cincinnati alternatives, such as the School for Creative and Performing Arts, the three elementary bilingual programs, and the Cincinnati Academy of Math and Science, lies in their special curricular offerings. Students in these programs study subjects that would not be available to them in

¹As part of an agreement made with the district when we undertook this study, we did not independently examine the impact of alternatives on racial balance, because of the sensitivity of this issue in relation to the pending desegregation suit. However, a recent district report indicates that between 1972-73, when alternatives were begun, and 1976-77, the overall segregation index in the district (defined as the percentage of students of one race who would have to be transferred to schools of predominantly the other race to achieve a racial balance in each school that reflects the overall district racial balance) has declined from 70 to 65 (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1977). The district's 1975-76 evaluation report indicates that all but three alternative programs (two of which were magnets serving predominantly neighborhood populations) were within the 70/30 racial balance guideline. The district did not report the impact of alternative program enrollments on the racial balance of sending schools.

their neighborhood schools. The Montessori program, with Montessori-trained teachers, special materials, and smaller class sizes, offers a learning environment that is noticeably different from other district elementary schools. From our brief visits, it was difficult to judge how much the teaching methods employed in the IGE programs differed from those of regular schools, but the school organizational structure and staff development component were clearly distinguishing features.

In contrast, the Elementary College Preparatory and Junior High College Readiness programs we visited did not appear to be very distinctive. The elementary program is "designed to accelerate the academic program of the intellectually talented student." The junior high program is "designed for the student with academic ability who needs extra help to become proficient."¹ Aside from the enrollment restrictions (students of average or above average ability or achievement) and the double-period classes (math-science, English-social studies) in the junior high program, these programs seem to have few special features. In selecting them, parents essentially seem to be opting for a traditional academic program with "good teachers" and "good students," and it could therefore be argued that these programs are not so much educational alternatives as a form of academic tracking.

Thus, while some of Cincinnati's alternatives seem to offer quite distinctive educational programs, others do not. Given the preeminence of the district's voluntary desegregation goal, however, diversity of educational offerings may not be the appropriate indicator of how effectively alternatives have been implemented in Cincinnati. Actual distinctiveness may be less important than the appearance of distinctiveness--or superiority--in the alternative schools. The provision of extra or superior resources to alternative schools--smaller class sizes, better teachers, special equipment--may be sufficient to attract students, even if the program theme is not particularly unique. The mere fact that all the students in a

¹The most able junior high students generally enter the Walnut Hills special college preparatory program in 7th grade.

program are there because they or their parents perceive it to be special may in itself be an important factor distinguishing alternatives from regular schools. Capitalizing on this sense of specialness may be a sound educational strategy.

At the same time, creating a system of "better" schools within the overall public system raises questions of elitism. Some critics have charged that Cincinnati's alternatives tend to serve an unrepresentative sample of the population, those students with special abilities or at least discernible interests. While most programs are open to students of all ability levels, it probably is true that alternatives attract children who are generally more motivated and whose parents are more interested and involved in their education. This is part of what makes these programs work, but it may also serve to weaken neighborhood schools, especially in less affluent areas, by taking away their best students.

The strategy of using alternatives to promote voluntary desegregation may thus create some tension between the interests of alternatives and those of neighborhood schools. Cincinnati's Citizens Task Force has recommended "that the content or techniques of existing alternative schools which have proven to be very successful should be incorporated into the standard traditional school whenever possible." Such a dissemination strategy would allow the entire system to benefit from the district's investment in innovative alternatives, which would help generate additional support for these programs. However, if adopted, such a policy would also tend to make the alternatives less special and thereby reduce their ability to attract students away from the neighborhood schools. Reconciling the dual goals of promoting alternatives and preserving good neighborhood schools remains one of the major challenges for decisionmakers in Cincinnati.

Conclusion

Cincinnati illustrates some of the major problems of sustaining an alternatives system aimed at furthering voluntary desegregation. After several years of implementation, a number of obstacles stand in

the way of institutionalizing the alternatives system: financial constraints that may limit the district's ability to provide continuing support to maintain program quality, the administrative complexities of managing a "system within a system," and tensions between the interests of alternative and regular schools. A fourth obstacle, the pending desegregation suit, demonstrates that institutionalization of alternatives may depend not only on complex internal dynamics but also on factors beyond the district's direct control.

Eugene

Four school years have passed since Eugene's new superintendent announced the district's intention to develop a number of educational alternatives. Ten alternative programs are now operating, seven at the elementary level and three at the secondary level,¹ enrolling slightly under 5 percent of the district's students. Several of these programs have sizable waiting lists but have no immediate plans for expansion. Two other elementary programs have ceased to function, as a result of implementation problems and lack of community support. The district has established a procedure for reviewing proposals for new alternatives, specifying the criteria that proposed programs must meet to be approved. Two new programs, one of them generated by a group of parents and another by a group of students, went through this review process and began operation this past year. Thus, Eugene has institutionalized a formal process for proposing and adopting alternative programs. This mechanism appears to provide a valuable safety valve for the system, legitimizing the development

¹One of the secondary programs, The Opportunity Center, designed for junior high students identified as potential dropouts, will probably be reclassified as a special education project rather than an alternative school, so that it can receive additional operating funds. An eleventh program operates as a part-time option at a junior high school. Though designated as an alternative by the district, it does not satisfy our definition of an alternative because it is not a full-time program.

of alternative approaches for the small percentage of parents and teachers who are dissatisfied with the conventional program.

Based on its experience to date, Eugene has altered its ground rules for developing alternatives in one important way. The superintendent has announced that, in the future, the district will emphasize alternative schools-within-schools, rather than magnet programs developed independent of a particular site. The fact that the district does not provide free transportation has diminished the value of the magnet concept in Eugene. Problems associated with installing magnet programs in neighborhood schools also contributed to this change in district policy. Those magnet programs already in operation will continue, but it is unlikely that additional ones will be started.

Eugene's elementary alternatives seem to offer educational programs that are clearly different from those of its regular schools. The responses of teachers in Eugene's elementary alternatives to a series of classroom practices questions on the Rand teacher survey indicate that five of these programs provide a more "open" classroom environment than the average school in the district, while a sixth program--the Traditional Alternative School--has a more highly structured classroom environment than the average school.¹ We also

¹We did not have survey data from Eugene's seventh elementary alternative.

Teachers in the "open" programs were more likely (and traditional school teachers less likely) than regular teachers to respond that in their classrooms: children work independently, children gather information on their own, children choose their own activities and materials, children interact freely with each other, children change places freely, various activities take place at the same time, and work and play are not distinguished. In computing an average district score on the open-traditional scale, we weighted the teacher responses to reflect the fact that we had sampled only eight of the district's twenty-four regular schools that do not house alternatives. Details of this analysis are found in the companion volume in this series, Rasmussen (1978). For analysis of the distinctiveness between Eugene's alternatives and the regular programs in their host buildings, see Thomas (1978), another report in this series.

had a chance to observe classes in operation in six of the seven elementary alternatives, as well as in a number of regular programs, and our impressions generally coincided with the results of the teacher survey. Of the six programs we observed, only Magnet Arts promised a special subject-matter emphasis, and during our visits we witnessed intensive student involvement in arts instruction and experiences. Four other programs were easily distinguishable from regular schools by their organization and informal style. In our opinion, however, the four classrooms of the Traditional Alternative School were not obviously different from some regular school classrooms we saw. Its teachers emphasized basic skills instruction and perhaps had somewhat stricter expectations about student discipline than the district norm, but we doubted that these classrooms would have had any difficulty operating within the framework of a regular district school. What parents accomplish by selecting this alternative is apparently the assurance of a traditional approach to instruction, whereas at the neighborhood school, classroom style would depend on the teacher to whom their child happened to be assigned.

We had the opportunity to visit several of the Eugene alternatives during two consecutive school years, and were therefore able to make some observations about the evolution of these programs over time. We observed, and participants confirmed, that in several of the open model elementary alternatives there had been a gradual reintroduction of structure into the programs during their third year of operation. One program, commonly regarded as the most "free" in the district, went through a crisis during its second year, as factions among staff and parents debated whether they wanted a "structured open program" or a "free school." On an evaluation survey, most parents gave the program high marks for achieving its affective goals,¹ but expressed concern about the "haphazard"

¹In a personal interview, one set of parents who had children enrolled in this school commented: "We figure we can teach them to read at home. But if they're going to spend that many hours in school, it's more important to have the supportive, nurturant environment."

approach to skills instruction. During our first visit to the school (during the program's second year), we too were impressed by the staff's high level of awareness of and concern for each student's emotional development, but we detected disorganization in the instructional process. When we returned the following year, it was apparent that the advocates of a "structured open program" had prevailed. Reading and math were now scheduled during set blocks of time each day, and the use of individual and small-group instruction in these periods tended to parallel methods we saw in some regular classrooms. Students were also being held more closely accountable for projects undertaken in free-choice periods; their contracts were now binding, whereas a "do your own thing" attitude had sometimes prevailed before.

This is not to say that these programs were now indistinguishable from regular programs; both our survey data and personnel observations indicated the contrary. However, it seemed to us that, to some extent, the "farthest out" or most ambitious alternatives were reintroducing some elements of traditional organization, scheduling, and record-keeping that they had tried for a time to live without. These adaptations may reflect a realization that some of the trappings of conventional schools could help serve their own goals of a more open learning environment: For example, volunteers from the community could only be effective if they knew when and where they could meet with students and could count on these meetings taking place. This raised the questions of whether additional training and staff support from persons experienced in implementing open programs might have allowed some of these lessons to be learned earlier, thereby avoiding some of the chaos and frustration of the first several years.

Because alternatives reflect educational philosophies, and these tend to shift with the times, the modifications in Eugene's open programs may also reflect an increasingly conservative mood in the community, in keeping with national trends. The recent founding of the Traditional Alternative School, which is oversubscribed, is perhaps another such indication. At present, Eugene's more open

alternatives still have a loyal constituency, but it remains to be seen whether there will be a further drift back to conventional practice as the years pass. Several programs have yet to face the loss of the key staff and parents--some of them dominant personalities in their programs--who originally envisioned and fought for the innovations embodied in the alternatives. As these individuals move on, it is possible that there will be insufficient commitment on the part of those who follow to keep the programs self-renewing, and that they will therefore gradually lose their distinctiveness.

One key factor determining the longer-run stability of the alternatives is likely to be district support. For the time being, Eugene's alternatives continue to enjoy the personal support of the superintendent, which is undoubtedly crucial to their survival. As we have seen in our review of program implementation in Eugene, however, much of the support for alternatives from the district is of an informal, personal type rather than being institutionalized in district policies. New alternative programs have no formal claim on start-up funds. In-service monies, which in the course of staff turnover could be critical to maintaining the distinctiveness of existing alternatives, are dispensed at the discretion of regional staff. A proposal by the former special projects assistant to incorporate some special procedures for alternative school staffing into the district's new personnel policy guidelines was not adopted, so that the special consideration alternatives have generally been given in staffing is not written into district policy.

Some of those involved in alternatives in Eugene question, therefore, whether the district's support for these programs would survive a change of superintendents. If a new superintendent were less personally identified with alternatives, it seems quite possible that informal support for them among district staff in key areas such as budget and personnel might begin to erode. While there appears to be little overt opposition to alternatives among district staff, neither does there seem to be strong support except from those directly involved in the programs. The former special projects assistant, who for two years served as the main champion of alternative

school interests in the central office, has left the district. Her replacement was hired under a revised job description that specifically downgraded emphasis on alternatives and has in fact spent much less of her time working with them. This change is supposed to reflect the fact that most alternatives are thought to be well enough established to be on the same footing in the district as regular schools. It is too soon to tell whether this assessment is justified, or whether, in fact, alternatives continue to need some special liaison to the district.

Most people we spoke with in Eugene agreed on the importance of the principal to the survival of alternatives. So far, the district seems to have deliberately assigned some of its strongest principals to buildings housing alternatives. When asked whether the types of changes embodied in most of Eugene's school-within-school alternatives could be achieved informally within a school at the discretion of the principal, most of our respondents agreed that they could. However, they considered it worthwhile nonetheless to become an officially designated alternative with school board approval because of the legitimacy it would provide should there be a change in principals. Several suggested that relatively few district principals would tolerate alternatives in their schools.

In summary, Eugene's alternatives are providing a distinctive learning environment for a small fraction of its students, though there appears to be a slight trend back toward conventional practice in several programs. The limited size of the alternatives effort has allowed the district to handle these programs for the most part on an ad hoc basis, with few changes in overall district policy. While informal district support for the programs continues to be relatively high, the lack of institutionalized support in the form of resources and formal policies may leave the alternatives vulnerable to changes in administration and program personnel.

To what extent have alternatives in Eugene affected the system beyond their effects on the limited number of students, parents, and staff involved? So far, there seems to have been little dissemination

of alternative schools' ideas or methods to other district schools. Regular school teachers we spoke with seemed not to be well-informed about the alternative programs and what they were doing. When regular teachers have requested opportunities to visit alternative schools, they have been able to arrange released time to do so, but there has been no district-initiated program to encourage this type of exchange. The head of one of Eugene's more successful alternatives developed some materials on how to organize schools-within-schools and approached the administration with a proposal for running workshops for other teachers, but the district has not responded. Thus the district has not attempted to use the alternatives as a stimulus for more far-reaching changes in the district.

At the secondary level, the district is reexamining the comprehensive high schools with the goal of creating more options within them. Alternatives may have contributed somewhat to this development. While the numbers of students enrolled in alternative high school programs is small, their impact has been felt at one district high school, where a number of staff positions were lost, and has generally helped to signal student dissatisfaction with the current secondary programs. The need to show more initiative in attracting and retaining students has also been felt by a number of elementary schools in this period of declining enrollment. The district's liberal open enrollment policy makes nonneighborhood attendance possible, and the existence of alternative schools has helped to make at least a moderate amount of competition for students acceptable. For example, one small nonalternative elementary school that was facing possible closing managed to boost its enrollment by actively recruiting students and providing prospective parents with a detailed written description of their program at all grade levels.

Another interesting impact of alternatives is the creation of the new role of head teacher in these programs. The handful of dedicated and energetic teachers who have assumed these new positions have received a sort of baptism by fire in educational administration. They have had to acquire organizational and management skills on the

job, and most feel that the experience has helped them to grow professionally. One young head teacher, who had no previous ambitions to become an administrator, accepted the head teacher's job in her program and seems to have flourished in the position. She is now contemplating returning to graduate school to work on an administrative credential. Like many innovative projects, alternatives may thus serve to enhance the skills and opportunities of those who work in them. One former head teacher of an alternative school has been promoted to the job of curriculum specialist, the number-two job in each of Eugene's administrative regions. By thus establishing alternative programs as a possible career-path to the central office, the district has sent a signal to other administrators that it values risk-taking behavior.

Conclusion

Overall, the creation of alternatives in Eugene seems to have responded to the needs of a small constituency in the community and among the staff. While the influence of the alternatives on the way education is conducted in the district has not extended much beyond the alternative schools, this seems to reflect primarily the limited demand for educational options that differ from those available in the regular schools. The district has shown the flexibility to accommodate different programs in its midst, but it has not provided active leadership in their implementation nor sought to expand their impact on its other schools. Without active initiative on the part of the district, which does not seem likely at this point, Eugene's alternatives system will probably not grow beyond its present limited size.

Minneapolis

In a sense, the institutionalization of alternatives in Minneapolis began when the school board in March 1974 instructed the administration to begin planning for elementary alternatives

throughout the district. If Southeast Alternatives is viewed as a pilot, experimental project, the decision to extend educational choices to the system at large may have been seen as a decision to incorporate a novel practice into the regular operations of the district. We have chosen to discuss the relevant aspects of creating alternatives outside SEA in the previous two chapters, however, because they also represent independent processes of initiation and implementation. In this section, therefore, we will examine three major questions: To what extent are the Minneapolis elementary alternative models, as they have been implemented around the district, in fact distinct and identifiable from one another? What steps have been taken at the district level to incorporate changes that support alternatives? What are the present prospects for development of additional alternatives?

In its final semiannual report to the board on the progress of alternatives in April 1976, the Minneapolis administration stated (Minneapolis Public Schools, 1976):

It appears that the goal of providing educational-choice programs for all elementary school children in Minneapolis has been met. In response to specific needs of each community, at least some options are available for each child other than attendance at the regularly assigned school.... There is every indication that the commitment to alternatives is firm. The involvement of faculty, students, parents, and community has been extensive....All this has been accomplished within the guidelines of the desegregation/integration plan. Although many questions and concerns remain, the administration now feels that the provision of educational-choice programs for elementary students has been accomplished. Unless the Board directs otherwise, no additional formal reports are planned.

During the 1976-77 school year, thirty-five of the district's fifty-nine elementary schools offered a contemporary program,¹ eleven offered a continuous progress program, six offered an open or modified

¹As noted earlier, we estimate that only nine of these thirty-five contemporary schools can be considered genuine alternatives. See footnote, p. 72.

open program, and seven schools offered more than one program in the same building. As explained previously, individual schools have been encouraged to adapt these basic models to their own need, so we would expect program specifics to vary among buildings using the same model. However, if implementation has been effective, we would nonetheless expect two open programs to resemble each other more than either resembled a continuous progress program, and vice versa. In practice, how clear-cut are the distinctions among Minneapolis's alternatives?

Analysis of Rand teacher survey data from a sample of eighteen elementary schools¹ revealed statistically significant variation among the three program types on seven questions dealing with classroom organization and practice. Contemporary, continuous progress, and open school teachers were progressively more likely to indicate that, in their classrooms: children work independently, gather information on their own, choose their own activities and materials, interact freely with each other, and change places freely; various activities take place at the same time; work and play are not distinguished. Despite these trends in the aggregate data, however, there is considerable within-program variation and overlap between programs. Using the responses to these seven items, we constructed a scale of open versus traditional classroom practices, and divided it into contemporary, continuous progress, and open ranges so as to maximize the number of classrooms falling in the range that matched their program label. We then examined how many classrooms of each type fell within the predicted range. About half the contemporary program teachers in our sample and one-third of the open program teachers described their classroom practices as falling within the range of continuous progress programs, and about one-quarter of continuous progress teachers described their programs as falling in the open or contemporary range.

¹Our sample included six contemporary schools, four continuous progress schools, five open or modified open schools, and three multiprogram schools. For a detailed explanation of sample procedure and more extensive analysis of the survey data, see the companion volume in this series, Rasmussen (1978).

This exercise probably tends to understate somewhat the degree of difference between programs. For example one of the major distinctions between contemporary and continuous progress programs, the use of a graded team-teaching organization in the latter, is not reflected in this scale. However, this analysis suggests that, within their self-contained classrooms, many contemporary teachers use the flexible individualized approach characteristic of continuous progress programs.

Minneapolis seems to have succeeded in its efforts to provide genuine choices, but there is some tendency for its two "extreme" models, the contemporary and open, to converge toward the "middle-of-the-road" continuous progress program. Inasmuch as individualized instruction has largely become the "accepted best practice" of American education in the 1970s, it is not surprising that many contemporary teachers have moved in this direction, nor would it seem desirable to discourage this trend in the name of diversity. At the other end of the continuum, it appears that a sizable number of teachers in open and modified open programs, whether because of educational philosophy or lack of adequate training, are not actually running open classrooms. If the parents who send their children to these programs are in fact committed to a more open approach (the popularity of the "modified open" concept suggests they may not be), then this may represent an important target for further program development and training activities.

Apparently, where programs lie along a continuum in terms of structure and style (as opposed to offering some unique subject matter, as in Cincinnati's elementary bilingual programs), there is a tendency for the distinctions among them to blur. This suggests that continuing efforts will be required on the part of the district to consolidate and revitalize its alternatives system, if the programs are not to become alternatives in name only. What steps has Minneapolis taken in this direction?

The final progress report to the board on alternatives cited above, in a section labeled "Concerns," emphasizes that the district must consider the needs of alternatives in a wide range of activities and decisions. For example, it acknowledges the need for flexibility

in personnel transfer policies in an educational-choice system, noting that, as a result of the court's favorable ruling, area superintendents "may continue to assign teachers to benefit specific programs, including alternatives."¹ It also notes that alternative schools receiving Title I funds may, with the Area Superintendent's approval, adopt reading materials other than those recommended for all district Title I schools to fit the needs of their particular programs. Thus, in a number of areas, from personnel to curriculum, district policies have been adapted to support program diversity.

The report also recognizes the importance of reinforcing alternatives at the classroom level:

...The crucial need for continuing *staff development* in alternative programs must not be neglected if the programs are to continue at a high level of performance. Funds for this kind of staff development must be budgeted on an annual basis to maintain and regenerate existing programs and to continue the search for increasingly effective learning environments for children. More effective and efficient delivery systems for staff development must be explored for all programs. [P. 15]

Unfortunately, despite these good intentions, the district's deteriorating financial position has reduced staff development opportunities. The district-run program of professional growth courses, for which teachers received credits toward salary increases, has been discontinued, thereby eliminating one of the incentives that stimulated some teachers to pursue in-service training for alternatives. When massive budget cuts were being made in the spring of 1976, it looked for a while as though the UM-MPS Teacher Center would be discontinued. Its supporters managed to save it, but it operated in 1976-77 at about half its previous level of district funding, still offering training to administrators and teachers in the implementation of alternatives. However, for the 1977-78 school year, district funding

¹ Minneapolis Public Schools (1976), p. 15. The Minneapolis court's decision on district prerogatives with respect to teacher transfers is discussed in Chapter IV of this report. As noted there, the implications for the staffing of alternatives of the Minnesota Supreme Court's recent reversal of this "favorable ruling" are not yet clear.

for the Teacher Center has been totally eliminated, although various district departments continue to purchase services from the Center.

Despite budget cuts amounting to \$5 million in the spring of 1976, the district managed to allocate about \$400,000 to the three area superintendents to support alternatives. The area superintendents used these funds to allocate additional staff positions to the continuous progress and open programs, and to maintain some staff development activities. In general, alternative schools had the discretion to decide how these extra staff allocations would be used. They could be used to hire extra classroom teachers, resource teachers, classroom aides, or counselors. In the West area, some of the area superintendent's discretionary budget has been used to support several community resource coordinator positions. The community resource coordinator, a position that had evolved during Southeast Alternatives' experimental years, serves as a liaison between the community and the school, performing such tasks as coordinating parent and volunteer participation in the school, providing program information to parents, and arranging community educational experiences for students. While some board members were skeptical about using discretionary funds to support community liaison work when they might have paid instead for additional teaching staff, continuous progress and open schools tend to regard the services of the community resource coordinators as essential to the integrity of their alternative models.

As we have seen, the development of alternatives in Minneapolis was not an isolated reform, but rather part of a comprehensive and multifaceted program of change in the district, in which decentralization and desegregation were also critical elements. Perhaps even more than any of the specific educational innovations implemented in the alternative programs, the major accomplishment of the alternatives movement in Minneapolis may have been the introduction of a process for change, with emphasis on local adaptation and broad-based participation by staff and community. In the face of new financial constraints and a change of administration, how likely

is it that this process of change will continue? In particular, what are the prospects for further expansion of the alternatives system? So far, it is hard to say. Leadership is a subtle yet critical aspect of the innovation process, and there is broad consensus in Minneapolis that former Superintendent Davis set an overall tone for change throughout the system. When this study was conducted a year ago, his successor, Superintendent Arveson, had been superintendent for only six months and was not widely viewed in the district as an innovator. Most observers had first impressions that signals from the district administration encouraging risk-taking behavior and innovation were weaker than they had been.

Superintendent Arveson has publicly endorsed the concept of alternatives, including them as one of the key goals of his administration. In January 1977, he reconstituted the district-wide Alternatives Task Force, charging it to develop an inventory of existing options and consider plans for the future of alternatives. To serve as co-chairpersons, he appointed one of the district's curriculum generalists (formerly associated with the Teacher Center) and a parent, both of whom had been active in the alternatives movement. Some of the district's strongest advocates of alternatives have nonetheless expressed the view that the current administration's support for alternatives is less active than it might be. These individuals would have liked to see the task force reconstituted earlier, with a cabinet-level administrator as its head, as a visible symbol of administration support for alternatives. The superintendent, however, explains that his choice to head the task force was a deliberate attempt to avoid the appearance of administrative control of its operations.

Under Arveson, the range of elementary choices has been broadened to include several fundamentals schools. Two schools, one in the North area and one in the West area, each of which had a strong parent-staff group pushing for a more traditional alternative, opened as fundamentals schools in the fall of 1977. Both have lengthy waiting lists. A third fundamentals school is scheduled to

open in the East area in the fall of 1978. The popularity of the fundamentals schools may indicate that the district's contemporary schools have in fact moved too far from a strict traditional approach (and toward a more flexible continuous progress approach) to suit some of their clients.

Aside from the fundamentals schools, the development of other new elementary alternatives has slowed considerably but has not ended. Although the goal of having options available to all elementary students in the district has been reached, not all schools are involved in clusters offering educational choices. A large number of contemporary schools in the district's so-called "white outer-ring" (areas with low minority populations outside the inner city) have not participated directly in developing alternatives, though their students have the option of attending alternatives with area-wide attendance zones or Southeast Alternatives schools.¹ To date, the district has concentrated on developing alternatives in the central city to maximize desegregation (by attracting white students into these schools). Presently, only the West area, whose area superintendent is commonly regarded as one of the staunchest advocates of alternatives in the district administration, is actively planning to extend alternatives to include all its elementary schools. The West Area Alternatives Committee (composed of twelve parents, twelve principals and teachers, and an area administrator) recently recommended that the thirteen area schools not presently offering educational choices be formed into two new clusters, with the goal of having alternatives operative by September 1978.

The widespread implementation of elementary alternatives in Minneapolis has raised the serious issue of articulation with secondary programs. In October 1974, the Minneapolis School Board voted unanimously to extend alternative educational opportunities to all secondary students, but it did not set a time line for

¹The Southeast Alternatives schools have district-wide attendance zones.

accomplishing this objective. To date, progress in developing secondary options has been limited. Alternative programs have been implemented at a few junior high and high schools, but as large numbers of students move to the upper grades from alternative elementary schools, the demand for new programs that would provide continuity of teaching and learning styles has been growing. Superintendent Arveson has stressed the need to develop workable secondary alternative models. Both the district Alternatives Task Force and Area Alternatives Committees are currently assessing what options already exist at the secondary level and making recommendations for future planning. Given the well-known problems of implementing complex reforms in secondary schools,¹ where it is difficult to break down the barriers separating traditional academic disciplines, and the district's current budgetary constraints, it seems unlikely that Minneapolis will undertake a comprehensive program of secondary alternatives comparable to what was attempted at the elementary level.²

Conclusion

There seems to be cause for cautious optimism about the future of educational alternatives in Minneapolis. Existing elementary alternatives are apparently providing parents and children with genuine choices. The district has committed its own resources to providing continuing additional support for alternative programs.

¹Most observers seem to agree that for a variety of reasons, including less complete parent and staff support, Marshall-University High School was less successful in implementing proposed educational changes than were the elementary schools in Southeast Alternatives. The result was that there is no clear model or prototype for other secondary schools to emulate.

²In addition to stylistic alternatives at the secondary level, the superintendent has also spoken of developing content-oriented alternatives. With declining enrollment diminishing the ability to offer advanced courses at all secondary schools, the district is planning to offer specialized courses at only one location, with students moving among campuses as their individual programs require. This strategy would also help with desegregation.

Another unusual arrangement the district has developed at the secondary level is the Federation of Alternative Schools. These

It now does its planning in a number of areas (personnel placement, staff development, curriculum, and facilities) with alternatives in mind. One of the district's three administrative areas is moving toward involvement of all its schools in alternatives; while the other areas are not at this point pushing widespread development of additional alternatives, they seem to be supporting their existing programs. A fourth type of elementary choice added in September 1977--the fundamentals school--has broadened the range of alternatives available. Recent budget cuts and the change of superintendent have probably slowed the process of change in the Minneapolis Public Schools. However, at present, the concept of and commitment to educational alternatives is still very much alive.

Summary

In this chapter, we have examined the present status of alternatives in our four study districts, and have speculated about their future. We may now draw some general implications about the problem of sustaining a system of educational options.

Of the four districts we studied, only Alum Rock has, in effect, dismantled its alternatives system. In the other three districts, alternatives continue to enjoy district support, albeit in differing forms. This suggests that where, as in Alum Rock, there is little community demand for educational choices and alternatives do not serve a high-priority political goal, such as desegregation, they are unlikely to be sustained. While other factors contributed to the eventual demise of alternatives in Alum Rock--the complexity of

five schools, started under private auspices to work with school dropouts, have in effect been incorporated into the district. An agreement was worked out whereby the district provides financial support to these schools and in turn receives state funds for the students involved. Students receive credits toward a district diploma for work done at the Federation schools and are encouraged to re-enroll in regular district high schools.

the voucher model itself, principals' dissatisfaction with their loss of power to mini-schools, lack of district leadership in designing and implementing distinct programs, and the proliferation of programs which proved confusing to parents--the roots of the failure of alternatives must be traced back to the initiation phase. From the start, the district's major incentives for undertaking the voucher demonstration were the prospects for administrative decentralization (which it did accomplish) and the opportunity to acquire substantial federal funds, rather than a commitment to educational alternatives per se.

In each of the other three districts, alternatives seem to be providing genuine educational choices, and the district's official policy in each case is to continue them. The true test of institutionalization, however, will be whether the changes in educational practice that have been installed in various alternatives are sustained. This does not mean that no further changes would take place in these programs; effective institutionalization would allow continued evolution of program design and the initiation of new alternatives in response to client and staff interests and needs. However, if the alternative programs in a district should become more and more like each other or like "regular" district schools, we would argue that alternatives had not been successfully institutionalized.

We have seen several illustrations of the potential vulnerability of alternative programs. In Eugene and Minneapolis, where alternatives are based on structural and stylistic differences, there is a danger that the distinctions among programs will become blurred. Several Eugene programs seemed to evidence a drift back toward conventional practice. In Minneapolis, not all teachers employ the classroom practices that define the model they are supposed to be implementing. In Cincinnati, where the distinctiveness of alternatives is more likely to depend on smaller class sizes, development of new curriculum, and services of special resource staff, there is some tendency to cut back on funds for these items once a program is established, which may cause its unique features to deteriorate in quality and fade with time.

While the potential for alternatives to lose their distinctiveness thus appears fairly general, we would hypothesize, on the basis of these cases, that the district's stance on these programs can make an important difference. Eugene and Minneapolis represent two strikingly different patterns in this regard. Eugene's alternatives remain essentially marginal to overall district operations. They are treated more flexibly by the administration in some areas, but as a matter of informal support rather than formal district policy. Individual programs, rather than the district, are responsible for student recruitment. The small size of most programs makes them especially vulnerable to staff turnover, since the district does not provide training for new staff so as to maintain program continuity. In sum, the alternative programs operate pretty much on their own.

By contrast in Minneapolis, because of the scope of the elementary alternatives effort, district operations have been adapted in a number of areas--personnel, curriculum, testing--to accommodate and support program diversity. Despite budget cuts, some extra funds are still made available to alternative programs to pay for special staffing needs and staff development. The district, through its administrative areas, informs parents of the educational options available to them. In short, the district assumes the responsibility for sustaining a system of educational choice, rather than leaving it up to individual programs.

The fact that Minneapolis's alternatives system is so much larger than Eugene's, and that it is tied to the district's desegregation plan, may partially explain why the district has taken a more active role in institutionalizing its alternative programs. Where there are only a few alternative programs, and where they appear to have a core of committed staff and parents, it may be natural for even a sympathetic administration to assume that, after the first few stormy years of implementation, they can fend for themselves. It is our strong impression, however, that this is not the case, and that without steady district support, the survival of such alternative programs is in question.

VI. TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE DISTRICT ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING ALTERNATIVES

This report has examined the implementation of educational alternatives in four school districts. We have discovered common challenges involved in establishing a system of educational choice as well as specific problems arising out of the unique situations of our sample districts. While the study has been exploratory in nature and definitive inferences cannot be drawn from such a small sample, the research suggests some tentative conclusions. This chapter summarizes what we have learned from the experiences of Alum Rock, Cincinnati, Eugene, and Minneapolis and offers some observations that may assist other districts in implementing alternatives.

The most important lesson of our research concerns the district's role in implementing alternatives: If alternatives systems are to survive in the long run, district officials must take an active and supportive stance during their implementation. A related finding is that alternatives may serve substantially different functions in different districts and the role played by district officials should therefore vary accordingly.

Specifically, it makes a great deal of difference whether a district sets out to implement a few alternatives to satisfy a small group of parents, students, and staff; to accomplish overall reform by converting to a district-wide system of choice; or to desegregate its schools by offering educational options. We believe these distinctions of scope and goals define fundamentally different types of alternatives systems, which have different requirements for successful implementation. We have therefore organized this chapter's discussion of the district's role in terms of three categories of district objectives: alternatives as a localized change strategy, alternatives as a comprehensive change strategy, and alternatives as a desegregation strategy.

When we speak of using alternatives as a localized change strategy or of a localized alternatives system, we refer to a system,

like Eugene's, involving a small number of programs, students, and staff, where students choose alternatives only if they wish to opt out of the "regular" program. We deliberately exclude from this category alternatives aimed at desegregation, regardless of their size. In contrast, where all students in certain grade levels or certain areas of a district must register a choice among available alternatives and there no longer is a "regular" program, we say that alternatives are being used as a strategy for comprehensive change in the district. This was the case in the Alum Rock voucher demonstration and in Minneapolis. The third use of alternatives--as a desegregation strategy--may be part of a comprehensive alternatives system, as in Minneapolis, or may be pursued independently, as in Cincinnati.

It is our impression, based on the telephone survey we conducted to select sites for this study and our review of literature on alternative schools, that most districts offering alternatives fit the localized model. A growing number of districts, however, appear to be using alternatives as a desegregation strategy. This trend may be further stimulated by recent federal legislation designed to encourage and support such efforts (Public Law 94-482, authorizing the Magnet Schools Program under the Emergency School Aid Act). To the best of our knowledge, use of alternatives as a comprehensive change strategy has been very rare to date--in fact, we know of only one or two possible cases other than the ones we studied. Nonetheless, it is also valuable to reflect on these experiences because other districts may consider comprehensive alternatives systems as a policy option, and because they are relevant to the more general problem of implementing comprehensive change in school districts.

The remainder of this chapter attempts to characterize what would constitute an effective district role in each of these types of alternatives systems. While we offer some specific suggestions for district policies and strategies, we have in no way attempted to develop a fully elaborated "how to" guide for implementing alternatives. To do so would be to overstate greatly the weight of our

limited empirical evidence. Moreover, we believe that detailed implementation strategies must be evolved in response to the actual school district setting and cannot, therefore, be prescribed from afar. Instead, our aim is to sketch in broad outline how a district should manage its alternative programs to advance the goals for which they were designed.

Alternatives As a Localized Change Strategy

Most of what has been labeled as the "alternative schools movement" in this country can be subsumed under our concept of "localized" alternatives. Districts employing alternatives in this way are those that have established one or a few alternatives to respond to groups of staff, parents, and students who are dissatisfied with the district's regular educational program. As described in Chapter I, the challenge has come for the most part from the pedagogical "left"--advocates of open, humanistic approaches to learning--though some districts have recently established fundamentals schools as alternatives. Adherents of such alternative approaches usually constitute a small minority of the district's total staff and clientele, and alternatives therefore represent localized changes rather than an attempt at district-wide reform. Eugene is a good example of a localized system and its experience suggests what might be an effective district role in such systems.

In a localized alternatives system, the initiative for specific types of programs ordinarily comes from teachers and/or parents rather than from district management. In this situation, the district's role becomes one of providing a supportive institutional environment in which the alternative(s) can be planned and implemented. An early contribution from the district should be technical assistance for groups developing alternative proposals. This is particularly important where parents, rather than teachers, are proposing a program.

One of the district's major functions in a localized system is to legitimize alternatives in the eyes of other district staff and the public. Formal administrative and school board authorization, while necessary, are only part of the story. District officials should attempt to cast alternatives in a light that is nonthreatening to other district schools. One alternative educator has described the preferred stance as a "win-win"--as opposed to a "win-lose"--philosophy: Alternative and regular programs are each worthwhile options for some students and some teachers, so one program need not advance itself at the expense of another (National School Boards Association, 1976, p. 11).

One of the first logistical problems to be solved in setting up alternatives is that of finding appropriate facilities. Where possible, providing separate facilities for an alternative program is desirable, because it avoids tension between programs sharing a building. Where separate facilities are not possible, however, alternatives should be placed with an eye toward minimizing the discrepancy in educational philosophy and style between the alternative and its host school. Care should also be taken to assign to multi-program buildings only principals with the skills to handle the special administrative and interpersonal pressures of such situations.¹

Localized alternatives are likely to be staffed by highly committed teachers. This voluntarism is a strength because district officials do not have to overcome staff resistance to proposed changes, as is often the case with district-initiated innovative proposals. However, it is not uncommon for teachers' commitments to trying an alternative approach to teaching--such as open education--to outstrip their practical knowledge of how to go about it. A major challenge in the initiation of many alternative schools therefore comes in trying to translate general beliefs into operational plans. The district should provide time for planning and curriculum development and opportunities for staff training.

¹See Vol. III in this series, Thomas (1978).

A district that wants to provide staff training and curriculum development assistance to its alternative programs may nonetheless lack support staff who are experienced in the particular alternative approaches being implemented, above all when the alternatives are very different from regular district programs in structure and style. Where alternatives are undertaken as a comprehensive change effort--as in Minneapolis--it is possible to train support staff in alternative approaches so that they in turn can assist program staff with implementation. In a localized alternatives system, however, where there are only a few alternatives, such a strategy may be unrealistic. Nevertheless, it seems desirable to have some district supervision of staff development activities, rather than merely to allocate discretionary funds to the programs for this purpose. This supervision could take the form of a district coordinator working with the alternative programs to plan the use of outside consultants, or visits to other similar schools in other districts.

In a localized alternatives system, the problem of defining the district role in assisting the teaching staff is one facet of the more general issue of defining its overall relationship to the alternative programs. Because alternatives may differ greatly from the mainstream of educational activities in the district, district officials may be tempted to write them off, allowing them to operate in relative isolation. They may adopt the attitude that if program staffs have the energy, creativity, and commitment to make alternatives work, that is fine; if not, the programs can simply go out of business. At the other extreme, nervous administrators may opt for overzealous monitoring of alternatives, which might prevent them from becoming genuinely distinct options. The challenge for the district is to strike an appropriate balance between autonomy, experimentation, and risk-taking on the part of the alternatives--including the right to make mistakes--and the district's ultimate responsibility for program quality and equity.

There is no simple formula that can solve this problem. The development of a trusting relationship between alternative programs

and the district administration is clearly essential. The anecdotal literature of the alternatives movement is filled with accounts of fledgling alternative schools struggling to survive in a hostile bureaucratic system, so district officials may have to overcome the tendency of some alternative school staff to view almost any district role as interference. If alternative school staff can be made to feel that district officials are genuinely committed to the success of alternatives and not merely looking for excuses to discontinue them, they may feel they can be open with administrators about implementation problems and seek district assistance in solving them. Of course, trust cannot be mandated. But some specific steps could be taken by district officials both to signal their support and to open up appropriate feedback channels. For example, the establishment of a central office position such as that of Eugene's special projects assistant, who had access to top-level administrators and enjoyed the trust of the alternative programs, can serve a valuable liaison function in a localized alternatives system.

A persistent issue is likely to be the question of which district regulations apply to the alternative programs and which do not. Once "alternative" status is granted, these programs may seek to be exempted from established district procedures for staff hiring, budgeting, attendance, field trips, evaluation, facilities use, scheduling, etc. An important--and inexpensive--way for a district to provide support for its alternatives is through waivers and administrative flexibility--that is, by not requiring them to do things "the way they've always been done" where established procedures are likely to diminish their ability to pursue their unique programs. Conceivably, the very process of questioning the usefulness of applying various district policies to alternatives might uncover areas where greater autonomy and diversity could also be granted to regular schools, thereby stimulating more far-reaching change in the district.

As we noted with respect to Eugene at the end of the last chapter, however, a danger in providing flexibility for alternatives on an ad hoc rather than a formal policy basis is the problem of sustaining

them in the long run. Where alternatives are small in size and few in number, they are especially vulnerable to staff burn-out, staff turnover, and a drift back to conventional practice. If a district is committed to maintaining alternatives, it must try to offset these tendencies by providing active support to keep the programs self-renewing. However, insofar as the district's support for alternatives--such as permission to use nontraditional staffing patterns--is not incorporated into official district policy, the alternatives may be subject to policy shifts caused by turnover in district staff or a changing political climate in the district. The district would thus represent not a stabilizing force for the programs, but an additional source of uncertainty. Therefore, while ad hoc district decisions seem to form an adequate basis for implementation up to a point, formal policies and procedures recognizing the special needs of alternatives may be required to establish a stable context for district support, which is necessary for their longer-term survival.

Alternatives As a Comprehensive Change Strategy

When alternatives are used as a localized change strategy, the goal is to create a few alternatives to the regular system; when they are used as a comprehensive change strategy, the goal is to create a system of alternatives. The much larger scope of change involved in the latter case implies the need for a different, more direct role for district management in the change effort. Yet, once again, this role must be handled delicately. For example, if a comprehensive program of reform were attempted in a top-down fashion with rigid direction from the central office, it probably would fail to achieve its purposes, as Chapter IV suggests. What appears to be required is a balance between central leadership and local initiative.

The district's role in a comprehensive alternatives system differs from its role in a localized system in program initiation. In a localized system, the district allows alternatives to be developed by interested staff without actively trying to generate

them. A district that decides to implement alternatives on a comprehensive basis, however, must stimulate broader-based interest and support among teachers. Its alternatives cannot be staffed by the small cadre of highly motivated faculty who would have been likely to introduce innovations on their own initiative; a cross-section of district teachers needs to participate.

To mobilize staff for such a comprehensive alternatives effort, a district needs to both provide incentives for and reduce the risks of participation. Opportunities for increased professional autonomy in designing alternatives, access to extra resources, and professional recognition may act as incentives for many teachers, as they did in both Minneapolis and Alum Rock. The district can reduce the risk associated with innovation by allowing teachers to help design the programs (and providing release time for these efforts), providing them with training to develop the required skills, and arranging for support staff to assist with implementation. While both Minneapolis and Alum Rock gave teachers responsibility for designing their programs (Alum Rock to a greater degree than Minneapolis), Minneapolis provided them with considerably more formal staff development and classroom assistance. We believe that these staff development and assistance activities contributed to the greater success of Minneapolis's program, and could well be emulated by other districts.

Even within the context of a comprehensive alternatives system, there is usually room for voluntary staff participation. Insofar as possible, the district should try to accommodate teachers' preferences for working in particular programs. As long as traditional programs are among the alternatives offered--as in both Minneapolis and Alum Rock--it will be easier for teachers who are minimally interested in innovation to participate comfortably in an overall alternatives system. Districts can build support for alternatives by dispelling the suspicion that "choice" is the first step toward imposing one innovative alternative model (e.g., open classrooms) on all teachers.

A more active district role in mobilizing staff support for comprehensive alternatives must be paralleled by a more extensive

program of parent information. Just as localized alternatives tend to attract a select group of highly motivated teachers, they also tend to attract unusually active and informed parents and students. In contrast, a comprehensive alternatives program should inform all parents about the philosophy of alternatives, the specific options available, and the mechanics for exercising choice. Two aspects of Minneapolis's program in this regard appear to have advantages over what was done in Alum Rock. First, the task of providing parent information in Minneapolis was simplified by the existence of only three basic program models, whereas Alum Rock's multiplicity of programs proved confusing to many parents. Second, the inclusion of parents in the planning process in Minneapolis helped to provide an informed and committed community which could help educate other parents.

Minneapolis's strategy of developing a small number of alternative models, with provision for local adaptation of these basic approaches, recommends itself on several grounds other than its utility for informing parents. It helped create a sense of common purpose throughout the district and facilitated the provision of district assistance for program implementation: District support staff could develop their own familiarity with the different alternatives, to better serve teachers implementing the programs in their classrooms. Such a focused effort would not have been possible had many different programs been introduced simultaneously.

In addition to the decision about how many different types of programs to offer, districts should carefully weigh strategies for phasing the programs into the district. The pattern followed in Minneapolis, of piloting the alternative models in one small section of the district before disseminating them district-wide, was probably an effective strategy for introducing alternatives on a comprehensive basis, though part of its success is undoubtedly attributable to the external resources available for program development in SEA. Nonetheless, even a district proposing to develop system-wide alternatives within its local budget might be wise to consider the Minneapolis

strategy of starting small and then expanding. This approach can allow the original developmental work to be located in schools that have the greatest interest in alternatives and the greatest chance for success. Having local examples of alternatives functioning effectively may be the soundest basis for creating more extensive demand and support for them. Available working models can also provide the basis for staff development and parent information, functions served by SEA for Minneapolis's larger alternatives effort.

While a limited pilot program may thus serve as a learning experience for district administrators and other district schools, the importance of local adaptation during the implementation process must be emphasized. Administrators, teachers, and parents in other areas of the city should be engaged in designing alternative programs that suit their perception of the specific needs of their students, staffs, and communities. Such a planning process is time consuming (Minneapolis communities generally had a year to plan before implementing their alternatives) and may seem inefficient compared with transplanting "tested" alternative models to other schools. But it is likely to yield greater returns in the long run, by allowing the people involved to develop a fuller understanding of and a sense of ownership in the innovations being attempted.

Implementing and sustaining a comprehensive system of alternatives requires significant change in overall district operations in a number of areas. Staff assignment policies must be adjusted to accommodate the unique needs of different kinds of programs. Similarly, district-wide curriculum and facilities planning, deployment of auxiliary personnel, and testing programs must take account of the diversity among programs. In short, there will be fewer programmatic decisions that can appropriately be made by the central office and applied in a standard fashion to all schools.

Thus, once comprehensive alternatives are implemented, the jobs of district managers are likely to be complicated by the very diversity of the system. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that few districts have attempted such extensive alternatives.

Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that such a program may be a useful vehicle for revitalizing the public schools and making them more responsive to the diverse needs of both clients and staff.

Alternatives As a Desegregation Strategy

One of the most pressing and difficult problems facing many school districts today is desegregation. As we have seen in the cases of Minneapolis and Cincinnati, alternatives may be used as a strategy to help achieve desegregation by providing attractive educational options away from the neighborhood school. And where alternatives are linked to desegregation goals, they may assume a higher priority in a district's overall political agenda than would otherwise be the case, as has been true in Minneapolis and Cincinnati.

It would be imprudent to generalize about the uses of alternatives to reduce racial imbalance on the basis of two isolated cases, because desegregation is so bound up in the particulars of each local situation. For example, the percentage of minority students and their geographic distribution in a district seem to be critical factors in the desegregation process. Thus, it is unclear whether the type of alternatives plan employed successfully in Minneapolis, with 20 percent minority students, would be equally workable in a district with 50 percent minority enrollment, such as Cincinnati. Moreover, the differing legal situations, community attitudes, and positions taken by local civic leaders and political figures make extrapolation from one setting to another unwise. However, we will attempt to suggest some very tentative lessons about alternatives as a desegregation strategy from our analyses of Minneapolis and Cincinnati.

We should first reiterate the essential difference between the ways these two districts have used alternatives as a desegregation tool. Minneapolis offers students choices among alternatives in elementary schools geographically clustered for desegregation purposes. Students are assigned to a cluster on the basis of

residence and must register a choice among the available programs. Students affected by the desegregation plan¹ must attend a desegregated cluster, but they may choose which desegregated school or program to attend within their assigned cluster. Some clusters are also "magnets"--students from mostly white schools outside the cluster may select an alternative within the cluster, so long as their transfer improves the racial balance of sending and receiving schools.

Cincinnati, in contrast, offers alternatives that students may choose instead of their otherwise assigned neighborhood schools. Admissions to the alternatives are regulated to achieve racial balance. While Cincinnati reserves the term "magnet" for a specific type of alternative (a neighborhood school that also tries to attract nonneighborhood students to improve racial balance), all of its alternatives--including those with no neighborhood attendance zones--are what are commonly considered magnet schools, that is, schools with special features designed to attract students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. And while Cincinnati has used magnet schools in a limited, voluntary desegregation plan, they may also be used in conjunction with a more extensive, mandatory plan. Under such a plan, students could either voluntarily attend a magnet school or be subject to some form of mandatory reassignment (e.g., by means of attendance area redistricting, school pairing, or clustering). Court-ordered desegregation plans in Boston and Dallas have used magnet schools in this way.

Minneapolis's experience suggests that comprehensive alternatives may be used to make mandatory desegregation more acceptable to the community, by focusing attention on educational improvement rather than transportation. A desegregation plan that uses pairs or clusters of schools to achieve larger, racially balanced attendance areas

¹As noted above, some predominantly majority schools in Minneapolis have not been included in the desegregation plan. The court established a maximum minority enrollment standard (no more than 35 percent of one group or 42 percent total minority) but not a minimum, so schools with mostly white enrollments are in compliance with the court order.

creates local units within which the planning of alternatives can take place. Such a plan supports what we have recommended above as an effective approach to developing comprehensive alternatives--local responsibility and variation within a framework of district leadership and coordination.

It is important to note, however, that the success of such a plan in reducing racial imbalance depends on having majority and minority students within each cluster choose each type of alternative in proportion to their numbers. If majority and minority students were differentially likely to choose a particular program, admissions would have to be controlled by race, thereby denying some students their freedom of choice and diminishing the overall appeal of the plan. Careful advance "market" research into the program preferences of families of different backgrounds is therefore essential for any district considering such a plan. If program preferences differ somewhat, but not greatly, by racial group, a combination of targeted community education campaigns and individualized counseling might help bring choices within the ratios needed to accomplish racial balance.

A district using magnet schools to promote desegregation faces a somewhat different set of problems than a district offering alternatives within desegregated clusters of schools. On the basis of Cincinnati's experience, we can offer some suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of a magnet schools system, though we will also note some reservations about the value of magnet schools as a desegregation strategy.

A first order of business for a district developing magnet schools should be the selection of program themes. Programs that offer special curricula--such as elementary bilingual, performing arts, or computer science--would probably need extra money for specialized staff and equipment. However, because they involve innovations only in specific parts of the curriculum, they would probably be somewhat easier to implement than more comprehensive, method-oriented alternatives, such as open classrooms, which require

extensive new training for classroom teachers. As Chapter V discussed, magnet schools can also be developed that are based on neither curricular nor method innovations, but merely offer a "higher-quality" standard program--e.g., by lowering student-teacher ratios or screening students by ability level.

How should the decisions be made about which programs to offer? Most of the ideas for Cincinnati's programs originated in the central office. This centralized pattern of program initiation was probably dictated by the district's desire to maintain a system-wide surveillance of various programs' desegregation potential, and its determination to establish a large number of alternatives quickly.

We cannot determine on the basis of one case whether a magnet school strategy requires a top-down approach for initiation, but we believe that it does not. If the district enlists school-level personnel and community members early in the deliberations on program design, it could build broader-based staff commitment and community support and assist district officials in ascertaining the likely popularity of different programs. The district could designate certain schools as potential magnet school sites and work with their staffs and communities to develop program proposals, while retaining the final say about whether a particular program would be authorized at a given site. As noted above, Cincinnati itself, having encountered resistance to some alternatives it imposed on schools, has adopted this approach in planning several of its newest alternatives. In these cases, it has allowed greater lead time before opening the programs than was typical of its earlier, centrally initiated models. Ample lead time would seem to be an important requirement for genuine participatory planning.

District support for the implementation of magnet schools should include a number of elements, including staffing. Insofar as possible, hiring and transfer procedures should be adjusted to allow magnet schools to acquire the teachers who are best suited to special program needs. The district should also provide for curriculum development, either by assigning special resource personnel to do the job or

by allowing teachers release time for planning. Staff development needs can be expected to vary with the type of program undertaken. Where teachers would be teaching in interracial situations for the first time, staff development programs dealing explicitly with human relations issues would be highly desirable.

In addition to providing the support needed to develop quality programs, the district must also concern itself with selling the programs to the public and recruiting students. Beyond the general publicizing of the magnet schools, district officials may have to carry out targeted recruitment campaigns to attract enough students of each race for a given program. The cooperation of regular school staffs in such recruitment efforts is essential but may be difficult to obtain, as we shall discuss below.

Because magnet schools may be expensive, and racial and ethnic balance may be viewed as the chief criterion of their success, a district may be tempted to begin cutting back on its special support for a program after a year or two. If the district's goal is to expand rapidly the number of magnet programs and sites, district officials may be under particular pressure to divert resources and management attention from existing programs to new ones. Such a strategy seems unwise; although it may be attractive in the short run, it may lead to gradual deterioration in the quality of the magnet program and to consequent loss of enrollment. The capacity of central office staff to provide continuing review and support to the magnet schools should be weighed carefully in deciding how many programs to establish, and how quickly. In the long run, from the standpoint of both education and desegregation, it is probably worth sacrificing the size of the magnet schools system to maintain its quality.

There are two larger issues surrounding the use of magnet schools: first, its potential impact on the entire school system, and second, its effectiveness in achieving desegregation. This use of alternatives involves some underlying problems. For example, the extra resources that may be needed to make the magnet schools

sufficiently appealing to attract students from their neighborhood schools may place a strain on the district's budget, diverting resources from programs (or potential programs) in other schools. Even if the district's other schools do not actually lose material resources--for example, if the district passed a special tax levy or obtained external funding to cover the excess cost of the magnet schools--they might nonetheless perceive themselves as worse off. The morale of their staffs and students might be undermined by the existence of "select" schools that were viewed by the public as being special or superior. Magnet schools could potentially be a source of new ideas and techniques for other schools in the district, but dissemination would have to be handled judiciously, so as not to diminish the distinctiveness and attraction of the magnet schools themselves.

In addition to tensions that may arise over resource inequities or morale problems, there is the danger that magnet schools may weaken other district schools by attracting their most able students. Even though magnet schools may not be restricted to students of high ability, they are likely to attract more highly motivated students, especially from predominantly minority group schools. This may have the additional negative effect of depleting the "nonmagnet" schools of their more active and involved parents. These prospects may make it difficult for the district to enlist the support of regular school staffs in recruiting students for the magnet schools.

What have we learned about the second issue, the ability of magnet schools to accomplish their goal of desegregation? Our evidence on this question is sparse. Judging from Cincinnati's experience, it appears that it is possible to create programs that can attract students of different racial backgrounds on a voluntary basis. However, even a seemingly ambitious system of magnet schools, such as Cincinnati's, has had a relatively small impact on racial imbalance in the district, because actual enrollment in alternatives is a small proportion of district enrollment, and racial isolation in the district's schools generally is severe. Part of the difficulty

may be that Cincinnati's magnet system is entirely voluntary. There is some evidence from other districts to suggest that, in large segregated systems, very little desegregation can be accomplished through purely voluntary means. An alternative use of magnets--as one component in a comprehensive desegregation plan with mandatory features--has proved effective in a number of districts. In these latter cases, students choose between magnet schools and assigned desegregated schools, rather than between magnet schools and their segregated neighborhood schools (Levine and Havighurst, 1977; Massachusetts Research Center, 1976; Bowler, 1972; Sampson, 1976).

In short, a magnet schools approach appears to be at best a limited tool in correcting racial and ethnic imbalance. Given the tensions it can create in the district-at-large, it may ultimately also be an unstable solution. Based on the limited evidence of this study, it is our impression that alternatives may contribute more to both desegregation and overall educational quality in a district when students are asked to choose among desegregated alternatives, rather than to choose between desegregated "special" alternatives and segregated "regular" schools.

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested what role district management can play to promote effective implementation in each of three types of alternatives systems. In a system of localized alternatives, the district may maintain a generally low profile, so long as it establishes the legitimacy of alternatives and offers a flexible administrative environment hospitable to their development. In a comprehensive alternatives system, the district must assume a more direct role in implementation, providing incentives for broad-based staff participation and orchestrating the overall program of change. In a system of magnet schools, district officials must play an active role in program design and logistical planning, and must also protect the magnet schools politically, by being sensitive to (and attempting to minimize) tensions between them and its regular schools.

Our differentiation among alternatives systems should not, however, obscure their major common feature: the importance of district support. To teachers, principals, and other program-level staff faced with the daily challenges of making a new program work, the knowledge that district officials are committed to their programs' success, understand their problems, and are willing to help, is a critical motivating factor. Of course, mere good intentions are not enough. District officials must cope with a variety of stubborn technical, organizational, financial, and political problems. Finding and implementing solutions to these problems requires a number of things: creative leadership, the integration of efforts across levels of the system, and the adaptation of uniform district procedures to accommodate the needs of diverse programs. For some districts, these things will come easily. For those districts that find them difficult at first, the implementation of alternatives might provide an opportunity for organizational learning, enhancing their overall capacity to manage complex changes.

Appendix

A NOTE ON THE COSTS OF ALTERNATIVES

When school professionals or laymen discuss a new educational idea, it is never long before the discussion turns to money. Tight budgets may be the most frequent reason for rejecting an otherwise appealing program. While analysis of costs was not a major focus of this study, our investigation of four districts' experiences with educational alternatives allows us to make some observations about the types of costs involved in such reforms.

The incremental cost of alternative education depends heavily on the nature of the alternatives to be attempted, the reservoir of skills already existing in the system, and the agenda of other problems the district must attend to. As we have seen, our sample of districts covered a wide range of options in terms of expenditures for alternatives. Two districts--Alum Rock and Minneapolis--spent huge sums initiating their alternatives systems, more than most districts could hope to spend without outside help. At the other extreme, Eugene created a small alternatives system while spending no more than its average per pupil expenditure for each of the students involved. Cincinnati, for each of the past several years, has invested about \$1 million in local funds in its alternatives effort, representing an average per pupil excess instructional cost of approximately \$165.

It is extremely difficult and possibly misleading to compare costs across districts, however. Different budgeting conventions create one obstacle. Also, excess costs can only be understood in terms of a district's baseline educational program. Thus, because Eugene's basic educational program is funded at a higher level than Cincinnati's (\$1,600 versus \$1,350), more is being spent (in an absolute sense) on the average alternative student in Eugene than in Cincinnati. At the same time, depending on the source of the excess costs (e.g., for elementary bilingual teachers), Eugene might

also have to incur excess costs if it were to implement a specific Cincinnati program, unless it were willing to sacrifice something already provided in its basic program.

Without attempting to provide specific cost estimates, therefore, we will merely suggest the *types of expenditures* a district needs to consider when adopting a policy of offering educational alternatives.

Start-Up Costs

Staff Development

If an alternative is to offer a truly distinctive educational program (that relies on classroom teachers rather than special staff), in-service training will almost certainly be necessary. The strategy of involving teachers in designing and planning their training (as utilized, for example, by the Minneapolis Teacher Center) appears to be sound.

Administrative and Planning Costs

New programs will require special attention from the district. Administrative responsibilities may be concentrated in a special alternatives coordinator or office (as in Eugene) or spread among district administrators (as in Cincinnati). Each of these plans has advantages and corresponding disadvantages. A special alternatives office will be able to devote complete attention to the alternatives and perhaps deal more effectively with their common problems. But it may tend to isolate the alternatives and impede the building of support for them among other district administrators. The pros and cons of dispersing responsibility for alternatives throughout the central office seem to be just the reverse.

Alternative programs are also likely to need considerable initial planning by program staff. If teachers are not compensated for this time, as was the case in Eugene and in some Cincinnati programs, such planning does not represent a monetary cost. However, to the extent that a district can provide release time or regular early dismissal

time to allow teachers to do this planning, we believe it would enhance the quality of the alternative programs and lessen the danger of teacher "burn-out." Where no such provisions can be made, district administrators would do well to show their support for the alternatives in other ways (visits to the programs, public recognition) to encourage continued commitment on the part of teachers.

Curriculum Development

Depending on the nature of the new program, it may be appropriate to assign a special coordinator to handle curriculum development and/or to provide release time to program teachers. (In some cases, teacher training, planning, and curriculum development activities may be combined.)

Facilities, Equipment, Materials

For some alternatives, such as open programs, remodeling of classroom space may be desirable. Depending on the type of program, special equipment or materials may also be called for.

Continuing Costs

The major ongoing costs likely to be required to support a program of alternatives are as follows.

Transportation

The only district we studied that did not provide free transportation to alternative schools (Eugene) attracted few students from outside nearby neighborhoods to its elementary alternatives. Without transportation, an alternatives system in effect offers choices only within the neighborhood school.

Public Information

An ongoing capacity to keep parents and students aware of their options so that they can make informed choices seems crucial to the

success of an alternatives program. The public information effort need not be elaborate; for example, regular community newsletters can be used to provide information about educational options. But the district should assume responsibility for whatever costs are involved and coordinate the effort, rather than leaving it entirely to individual programs. Where alternatives are being used to promote voluntary desegregation (as in Cincinnati), the district may have to devote greater resources to public information and student recruitment.

Staff Training

Staff turnover represents one of the greatest vulnerabilities of any special program, including alternatives. This is likely to be especially true of small, school-within-school programs. When key staff who were responsible for the initial design and implementation of a program leave, and such innovators are typically the types of people who seek new opportunities and challenges after a few years, it is not uncommon for them to be replaced by staff who do not understand the program's philosophy or mechanics as well. This can result in a drift back toward standard practices. With this in mind, it would make sense to include in the district budget funds for training new alternative program staff. The use of veteran staff as trainers could provide a renewal mechanism for them also.

Incremental Instructional Costs

Beyond start-up costs and the continuing costs already enumerated, do alternative programs per se cost more? The only answer we can provide is that some do and some do not. If a program is distinguished by its smaller class sizes or its special extra teachers--e.g., language teachers in a bilingual program--it will require a higher level of funding. A district strictly committed to equal per student expenditures would have difficulty justifying such programs, but we suspect it is a rare district that adheres strictly to such a formula anyway. Many districts could probably sell such programs to their

constituents provided the incremental costs were not large, and all district students had equal access to the alternatives. For districts using alternatives as a desegregation tool, spending more on students in magnet programs may be a necessary part of the strategy. Additional staff, better facilities, and special equipment can serve as enticements to parents to voluntarily send their children to schools outside their neighborhood.

Open-structure and continuous progress programs have been among the most common alternatives implemented at the elementary level in recent years. It appears that such programs *can* be operated for the same per-student cost as a traditional classroom, but that some additional resources are desirable. In Eugene, where per student costs were fixed at the district average, several programs nonetheless arranged to increase the adult/student ratio by translating some certificated staff positions into a greater number of uncertificated positions. Minneapolis area directors have used some of their discretionary budgets to provide extra staff positions for open and continuous progress schools.

One obvious distinguishing feature of continuous progress and open programs is the need for greater planning and coordination among teachers. This need is an ongoing one, not one that can be satisfied with workshops before school begins. Organizational arrangements that provide teachers with planning time as part of their work day (as in the IGE model or through early release days) seem sensible.

Some alternative programs emphasize the involvement of parents and community members in the classroom instructional process. Such volunteer services are often promoted on the grounds that they can enhance the educational program without additional costs. Programs in both Minneapolis and Eugene found, however, that it takes the efforts of a teacher or other paid staff person to coordinate such outside help effectively so that it is in fact an asset to the program. Support of a position such as Minneapolis's community resource coordinator would require some additional funds.

The Role of External Funding

The sizable commitment of federal resources to two of our four districts raises the issue of the role played by external funding in developing alternatives. The contrasting fates of alternatives in Minneapolis and Alum Rock indicate that a large infusion of outside funds alone does not guarantee creation of a durable system of alternatives. The differing experiences of these two districts contain several lessons for federal education officials.

One major difference between Minneapolis and Alum Rock seems to have been in the local commitment to the changes being attempted. Minneapolis was already introducing open and continuous progress classrooms in Southeast prior to the federal project, with considerable interest on the part of parents and staff. Former Superintendent Davis has commented that, without SEA, Minneapolis probably would have had alternatives anyway, though the federal money allowed for more thorough development and testing of the alternative models than would otherwise have been feasible. In Alum Rock, however, alternatives were not part of the local educational agenda prior to the voucher demonstration. This comparison underscores a key finding of another recent study of federally sponsored change agent projects: Innovations undertaken opportunistically--because funds are available--are much less likely to be continued when outside funding ceases than innovations adopted as solutions to local problems (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977b). It is consistent with this view to note that the voucher demonstration was seen by Alum Rock as a means of advancing its goal of administrative decentralization, and that decentralization of many decisions to the *building* level has persisted beyond the demonstration, even though alternatives have been almost entirely discontinued.

The way outside funds were used in the implementation effort may also explain why alternatives were established more effectively in Minneapolis than in Alum Rock. One important factor in SEA's

success appears to have been its emphasis on staff development. Approximately 15 percent of the project's \$6.6 million five-year budget was allocated to staff development; providing both training workshops and resource specialists to assist teachers in their classrooms. The comparable figure for Alum Rock was roughly 5 percent, distributed to mini-schools in their first two years for in-service and curriculum development, and used mostly to pay teachers for planning time. In keeping with the voucher model, the district's role in providing staff development and curriculum support in Alum Rock was minimal. The greater success of Southeast Alternatives in achieving district and durable educational alternatives suggests the value of its strategy of providing intensive support from the project or district level for teachers attempting to bring about changes in their classrooms. Such support appears to be one of the most appropriate targets for investment of outside funds.

Another distinguishing feature of SEA was the concentration of large amounts of money in a very small number of schools. The strategy was that of the demonstration or pilot project which could later provide a working model for similar changes in the rest of the district. As it turned out, SEA seems to have served this function rather effectively, thereby increasing the return on the federal investment. However, the Alum Rock voucher demonstration also concentrated much money on a small group of schools, without comparable long-term impact on either participating schools or the district-at-large. The differing outcomes of these two projects suggests that SEA's success as a pilot program depended not on the initial federal grant but on the local commitment of funds to the district-wide alternatives system, and the district's ability to build support for and manage the larger change effort. These factors in turn depended on the linkage of alternatives with another pressing district priority--desegregation--and the management style of the district administration. Thus, while the financing of intensive but small change efforts, as a preliminary to more extensive district efforts,

is an appealing model for federal intervention, the ability of such projects to stimulate and facilitate change on a wider scale is likely to depend on factors in the local setting rather than on federal support.

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